ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH
CAMBRIDGE

1879 – 1979

A Centenary Survey
by
R. Buick Knox,
Professor of Ecclesiastical History,
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ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH
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THE HISTORY OF ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH

The Presbyterian Background

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries many members of Cambridge Colleges were eager supporters of the Protestant Reformation and many Fellows were powerful advocates of a further reform of the Church so as to make clear beyond doubt the repudiation of many of the practices and beliefs of the Church of Rome and also to set up a form of government in the Church which they believed would be in accord with the teaching of the New Testament. Many of these propagandists drew their inspiration from the presbyterian discipline as expounded and established by John Calvin in Geneva. This agitation was part of a national ferment and was one of the causes which led to the Civil War. When the royalists were defeated in 1646 the stage seemed to be set for a presbyterian reorganisation of the Church of England. These hopes were doomed to failure. The victorious Parliament was in no mood to give final authority in Church affairs to presbyterian courts of discipline. Hopes were further dashed by the rise of Cromwell to supreme authority in the state; he was mainly concerned to ensure that ministers would be men of character, and men of good character were approved without much reference to their denominational loyalty, and therefore Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists and Episcopalians were to be found in the parish churches during his regime. This variety was pleasing to very few and there was a reaction in favour of the monarchy.

Presbyterians were disappointed that their hopes of a national establishment had faded and they supported the restoration of the monarchy. They hoped that in return for their support the restored episcopate would make concessions to their presbyterian scruples sufficient to enable them to be at home in a new comprehensive system. However, the old system was restored with few concessions and the Act of Uniformity of 1662 required that all who would minister in the Church of England must show that they were episcopally ordained. So began a period of hardship for over nineteen hundred clergy who were ejected from the parish churches and from colleges; over sixteen hundred

of these would have been counted as Presbyterians but they had no hope of setting up or maintaining a presbyterian system outside the Church of England. They had to survive as best they could as ministers of secretive local congregations and though some of them tried to maintain some semblance of presbyterian government by ministers and elders their congregations by force of circumstances had to become more and more independent and congregational. Nevertheless, in spite of all the hardships, many nonconforming congregations persisted until they gained relief through the accession of William of Orange under whom they gained a tolerated existence by the Act of 1689. In the years around 1700 there were two congregations in Cambridge, one in Downing Place and one in Green Street, which were known for a time as presbyterian churches but they were prone to frequent divisions and mergers and eventually their progeny was to be found in congregational and baptist churches. By the middle of the eighteenth century Presbyterianism in Cambridge had become virtually extinct. Moreover, many of the nonconforming churches which would have liked to claim a presbyterian title drifted to an Arminian and to an Arian position and by 1800 perhaps not more than thirty churches in England had maintained anything like a traditional orthodox presbyterian organisation and doctrine and it was not likely that these could have been the heralds of a presbyterian resurgence.

In the nineteenth century, a fresh presbyterian influence began to appear. Many Scots came to England for business and professional reasons and there were also not a few Irish Presbyterians. They soon began to set up a network of presbyterian churches in England. Some of these had a close affinity with the Church of Scotland and they petitioned to be organised as an English Synod of the Church of Scotland but the General Assembly in Scotland decided that they should organise themselves into an English Presbyterian Church and this came to pass in 1842. There were also other presbyterian churches which were linked to the United Presbyterian Church. In 1876 these two strands came together to form the autonomous Presbyterian Church of England governed by Presbyteries and by the Synod which met annually.

The Synod was from the first eager to encourage the foundation of new churches and it was not long before its attention was drawn to the university cities.

The beginning in Cambridge

The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge had been forced in 1871 to end the rule compelling all students to attend Church of England services in the college chapels. This led to a marked increase in the number of Presbyterians at both universities and it was estimated there were about two hundred in

Cambridge by 1880. Moreover, it soon appeared that some of the citizens of both cities and some senior members of the universities were sympathetic to the presbyterian cause. However, local support was not sufficient to found a new congregation. A student constituency was not a likely field for financial support for the erection of buildings and the maintenance of a ministry. If the need for a presbyterian church was to be met then the Synod and the Presbytery would have to act. The Synod realised the need; the overwhelming presence of the Church of England could swamp impressionable students freshly removed from their ancestral links.

In 1879 a petition was organised in Cambridge and forwarded to the Presbytery of London asking that presbyterian services should be begun in the city of Cambridge. Some indication of the motives and aims of the petitioners can be gleaned from an examination of some of the signatories. It would be untrue to imply that all the Presbyterians in Cambridge were so denominational in outlook that they would not cross the threshold of an Anglican church or chapel. There was in Scottish Presbyterianism a strong element which stood for the idea of an established Church and believed that the state had a duty to recognize and foster the Christian religion. Even those in the Free Church tradition were not against the principle of an established Church but against the particular form of establishment as seen in the Church of Scotland. Therefore it was not uncommon for Scots when in England to attend the services of the Church of England, and there were, and still are, some in Scotland who regarded the existence of the Presbyterian Churches in Oxford and Cambridge as a slight upon the sister establishment. Moreover, when students contemplated coming to Cambridge in the days when tests were still in force, they were well aware of the regulations requiring compulsory attendance at chapel services, and they, with their parents' knowledge, were ready to comply even when they would have preferred forms of service to which they were accustomed.

One signatory of the petition was Professor James Clerk Maxwell. He was a Scot from Midlothian and had shown remarkable scientific gifts while still a student at Edinburgh. In 1850 he entered Trinity College and became second Wrangler in 1854 and a Fellow of Trinity in 1855. In 1856 he became the Professor of Natural Philosophy in Marischal College, Aberdeen, and while there he married the daughter of the Principal. In 1860 he became the Professor of Natural Philosophy at King's College, London. In 1865, when still only thirty-four, he retired to private life but emerged in 1871 to accept the invitation to become the first Professor of Experimental Physics at Cambridge and he supervised the building of the first Cavendish Laboratory presented by the Duke of Devonshire. To attain such eminence he had to

conform to the tests requiring attendance at college chapel, though just at the moment when he reached professorial status the tests were relaxed. Yet he still retained sufficient attachment to his presbyterian inheritance to lead him to give the great weight of his signature to the petition. He died in the same year at a tragically early age and so there can be no evidence whether or not he would have become a member of the new presbyterian congregation.

Another signatory was Professor James Stuart. He was a Scot and came from the Free Church at Markinch and had graduated at St Andrews. He entered Trinity College as a scholar in 1862 and then became a fellow of Trinity and rose to be the Professor of Mechanism in the University. His presbyterian background did not prevent him from making the required conformity to Anglican usages and he attended college chapel services eight times weekly and took his turn at reading the lessons. Nevertheless, he did not lose his sympathy for dissent and it was eventually broadened when in 1890 he married into the notable Norwich Congregational dynasty of Colman and he became well acquainted with many famous Congregationalists including Dr R.W. Dale and Dr A.M. Fairbairn. He also admired the Unitarian leader, Dr James Martineau. In Cambridge he was in sympathy with the campaign for the abolition of the tests compelling attendance at college chapels and in 1869 he attended a meeting addressed by Professor Adam Sedgwick. Therefore it was natural that he would sign the petition but there is no evidence that he gave any active support to the venture. He soon left Cambridge to become a director of the Colman mustard business and he also entered Parliament and it is curious that his two seats were Hackney and Hoxton where two Dissenting Colleges were located.

After 1871 when it became possible for students to claim exemption from attendance at college chapel one who claimed this right on the ground of conscience was Donald MacAlister who entered St John's College in 1873. However, having established his right not to attend, he was quite willing to attend and was often in college chapel. On Sundays, he would attend service in the College chapel and then proceeed to Victoria Road Congregational Church where he also taught for a time in the Sunday School. When the plan for a presbyterian church was mooted he was naturally among the petitioners and during its foundation and for many years of his life he was, as the unfolding story will show, one of the main pillars of St Columba's Church.

Another student signatory was Charles Archibald Anderson Scott, a candidate for the presbyterian ministry and also a Johnian; he too was an influential figure in later life when he returned to Cambridge as a renowned New Testament scholar.

The petition was presented to the Presbytery of London on 11 March 1879; Dr Dykes, the minister of Regent Square Church, said it was 'suitably expressed and in all respects fit to be read to the Presbytery'. It was referred to the Church Extension Committee which recommended to the Presbytery on 8 April 1879 that services be arranged in Cambridge 'during the winter session of the University this year, to be continued or otherwise as the Presbytery may subsequently determine'. On 7 October Mr G.B. Bruce, the Committee convener, reported that plans were ready for the beginning of the services on 12 October; on 11 November he reported they had begun as planned and the response warranted the continuation of the services into the new year. On 10 February 1880 the Presbytery decided the time had come to recognize Cambridge as a preaching station and an interim Session was appointed with the Rev Dr Hugh Paterson of Notting Hill as convener and an appeal was made to English Presbyterians for £300 a year to finance the venture.

The services were held in the Guildhall. Many famous ministers were invited from Scotland to conduct services and to give the new venture a standing in Cambridge. Rainy came from the Free Church and Flint and Milligan from the Church of Scotland. Notable help was given by the Rev W. Bruce Robertson, D.D., who had been the United Presbyterian minister at Irvine and had retired in 1878 and was thus free to help at a vital time; he was said to be a replica of John Wesley and his work was long remembered; a portrait of him was presented to the church in 1929. Two preachers came from Ireland; the Rev Dr Fleming Stevenson, an outstanding advocate of Foreign Missions, came from Dublin; the Rev J.A. Rentoul, LL.D., came from Donegal. Rentoul had resigned his charge in Letterkenny early in 1881 and had come to live in England; he became minister of Woolwich in February 1882 but in the meantime he gave assistance in Cambridge.

Among local leaders was James Rae. He was a Scot who had opened a drapery business in Cambridge and had become a poor-law guardian. Since coming to Cambridge he had been associated with Emmanuel Congregational Church but he was restless therein and was ready for an opportunity to revert to Presbyterianism and he gave his full support to the growing congregation. A further great reinforcement took place when Alexander Macalister, F.R.S., D.Sc., the Professor of Anatomy in Trinity College, Dublin, and an elder in the Irish Presbyterian Church, was appointed to be the Professor of Anatomy in Cambridge; from his arrival he threw himself fully into the development of the congregation and the story will show how until his death he was a pillar of the Kirk.

The new community soon felt the need for premises of its own. Indeed, as early as 1879, Josiah Chater, a Cambridge accountant, had been empowered by some of the members to offer £1010 for a piece of ground at the junction of Hills Road and Lensfield Road but the offer was not sufficient and the land was part of a larger site on which the Roman Catholic Church was later to be built. The erection of a building was eventually taken in hand by the Presbytery of London and the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England. The Synod set up an Oxford and Cambridge Committee to plan the development in the University cities. By a Trust Deed of 1885 it was laid down that any property connected with the Cambridge project would be vested in Trustees who would hold it for the Presbyterian Church of England. The Synod Committee would eventually nominate a suitable minister. This seemed proper since the Committee was likely to be aware of the available talent and of the needs of a congregation in a university city. The local congregation would be asked to concur in the nomination.

The indefatigable advocate of church extension, G.B. Bruce, now Sir George Barclay Bruce, undertook the organisation of the appeal for the building fund for churches in Oxford and Cambridge, the Cambridge project to be completed first. The appeal was launched in 1888. The printed circular said that some of the best of Scotland's young people made their way to Oxford and Cambridge and there was as much need in Oxford and Cambridge as in Ireland and Scotland for the characteristic presbyterian simple forms of worship and of the pure Gospel; already too many had been lost to Presbyterianism 'as students are not likely long to care for a Church which extends no care to them'. The appeal went far and wide and drew an encouraging response. A deputation went from the Presbytery of London to plead the cause at a public meeting in Edinburgh. Bruce said that without a presbyterian church in Cambridge Scottish students would drift into the Church of England which was 'at this moment marvellously unsatisfactory' due to the drift from Reformation principles. Dr Dykes supported Bruce and said many students were also liable to drift from any church connection. The meeting was told that the services in the Guildhall were attended by over three hundred people every Sunday but of these only about thirty were students, and these out of an estimated two hundred Scots in Cambridge University; thirty was far from the number which might be gathered with proper pastoral care. A committee of leading ministers and laymen from the Church of Scotland, the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church was set up to elicit contributions and over £4000 was received from Scotland. The list of Irish contributors has survived and among the names are Brown, Corry, Crawford, Dixon, Haslett, Hogg, Kinghan, Mitchell, Musgrave, Nugent,

Reid, Sinclair and Taylor and they read like a roll of the leading mercantile and professional families in Irish Presbyterianism. One of the most interesting gifts to the fund was £25 from the Consistory of the Congregation of the Reformed Church of Holland in Austin Friars, London.

The site cost £3,700 and the estimated cost of the building was £8000. The foundation stone was laid by Sir George Barclay Bruce on 30 May 1890. The architect was Mr J. MacVicar Anderson who had designed the St Columba's Church of Scotland which had been completed in Pont Street in London in 1884. The contractor was a local builder called Saint and the clerk of works was Mr William Wren. The building was opened and dedicated on 7 May 1891. Rev Dr Donald Fraser presided; he was minister of Marylebone and his oratory and his ceremonial dignity and hauteur gave him for many years an almost unquestioned presidency on such occasions. The Te Deum was sung and also an anthem composed by Stuart Macalister, a son of Professor Macalister, and his name and fame will recur in the story of the church.

On 12 April 1892 the Presbytery of London decided, on the motion of Rev J.R. Gillies of Hampstead, that the time had come to raise the preaching station at Cambridge to the position of a sanctioned charge. Gillies also announced that the Synod Committee had nominated a minister for the new church and had arranged that his stipend would be £500 a year. A meeting of Presbytery was held in Cambridge on 14 April and the name of Rev Hugh Falconer, B.D., of Juniper Green Free Church, Edinburgh, was submitted to the congregation and it received unanimous approval. Falconer declined the call and it was not until January 1893 that the Presbytery was informed that the Synod Committee was now ready to submit another name to the people. The Presbytery arranged a meeting in Cambridge on 23 January when the name of the Rev A. Halliday Douglas, M.A., minister of Huntly Free Church in the Presbytery of Strathbogie, was submitted to the congregation. This was unanimously accepted and Douglas was inducted on 10 March when Dr Monro Gibson, the minister of St John's Wood Church in London was the preacher. On 14 March the Presbytery added two local elders to the Interim Session; they were Professor Macalister and the Rev John Fordyce, M.A., a Scottish minister returned from Simla in India. Thus, Douglas, Fordyce and Macalister formed the first local Session with Macalister as Clerk, and one of their first decisions was to ask the Presbytery for permission to give the new church the name of St Columba.

When the church was opened £1600 had still to be raised and a further appeal was issued. It was said that the people in Cambridge had given as much as could reasonably be expected. The Synod took responsibility for

the remaining debt and for bringing the stipend up to the promised level. This justified the Synod's claim to nominate the minister but the claim was to be a source of tension in later years. In 1906 it was proposed in the Synod to remove the guarantee to supplement the stipend and to place the Cambridge church in the same class as any other, but still reserving to the Synod Committee the right to nominate future ministers. However, financial assistance was continued for many years.

This internal tension was a minor difficulty compared with the weekly responsibility of maintaining and commending the presbyterian form of worship in a city with its inescapable Anglican environment, its ancient university, and its uneasy combination of town and gown. Moreover, the new church was seeking to establish itself just at the time when many traditional patterns of thought were being dissolved. The age of the universe had now to be measured in billions of years rather than thousands, and the story of the human race was being traced back into hundreds of thousands of years of prehistoric times. Fresh biblical studies were bringing to light new aspects of the history of Israel and of the composition of the Bible. The impact of these new areas of knowledge could not but be disturbing nor could they be evaded in a city such as Cambridge. Ministers had therefore to commend the faith in this new and disturbing atmosphere and they often found it an exhausting task and were ready to move after a few years. Preaching in St Columba's has always had an element of preaching on trial before homiletic detectives ready to pounce on every weakness. When the formidably erudite twins, Mrs Lewis and Mrs Gibson, joined the congregation and proceeded to furnish the minister with a weekly post-mortem of the textual and exegetical nuances of the sermon, the strain must have been immense and cannot have been entirely eased by the accompanying words of appreciation. This was only one of the many ways in which these ladies will be seen as a pervasive influence on the life of the church.

Westminster College

St Columba's shared the common tradition of Christendom but this tradition had come through presbyterian and Scottish channels and in the early years was much in the mould of the United Presbyterian and Free Church outlook; the tradition predominant in St Columba's was the tradition as shaped by the great Scottish teachers, A.B. Davidson, Robert Rainy, James Denney and George Adam Smith. The advent of Westminster College to Cambridge in 1899 brought a further influential strand into the life of the church. There was some trepidation in the Session over the new arrival. In presbyterian circles in Scotland it was customary to co-opt college professors

into the Session of the churches they attended but the prospect of three being introduced into the one Session in Cambridge was rather alarming; after some discussion and a subsequent delay the matter was left to the test of time when professors could be elected on the same basis as other members of the congregation. Nevertheless, the impact of the college upon St Columba's was inescapable. Principal J. Oswald Dykes, D.D., was a notable preacher in the traditional mould and he laid much weight upon the authority of tradition. Professor Skinner, the next principal, was an outstanding Scot who embodied in himself a profound spirituality and the highest reputation as a biblical scholar and he was made a Doctor of Divinity of Oxford University. His influence upon St Columba's was immense, all the more so in that he never sought to wield influence. Professor R.T. Jenkins, C.B.E., Litt.D., LL.D., of the University College, Bangor, attended St Columba's in his student days and with his taste for Welsh oratory he compared the famous Scottish preachers who visited St Columba's with unknown Welsh preachers, usually to the disadvantage of the Scots, but Skinner shone for him as a great and good man. With the advent of John Oman to the College a new slant was given to the thinking of English Presbyterianism. The weight of the authority of forms, dogmas and traditions was for him no criterion of belief; the only rightful authority was the compulsion of an inward vision which enabled the believer to give a free and personal assent to the doctrines taught by the Church. This inward vision was a grace given by God but God's grace was no constricting imposition by an omnipotent deity but a generous invitation which awaited a free personal response and this response proved to be a liberating experience in which the whole personality flourished. Oman's influence in and beyond presbyterian circles was profound and Professor C.F.D. Moule has said that Oman's book, *Grace and Personality*, is one of the most exquisite books of religion ever written. Oman, with his doctorates from Edinburgh and Oxford, brought great distinction to the College and he has been the only member of the Senatus ever to be a Fellow of the British Academy. His influence was felt in St Columba's and the Oman tradition was splendidly maintained by Professor Herbert H. Farmer, D.D., who combined his College chair with a University professorship and the eldership in St Columba's. He, like Oman, left his mark on generations of students. To listen to Professor Healey or Principal Macleod preaching or lecturing is to hear authentic echoes of the Oman-Farmer tradition. This philosophical approach to theology was balanced by the profound New Testament scholarship of Professor Anderson Scott D.D., who was the first nonconformist to gain the Cambridge doctorate of divinity, and by the catholic, reformed, evangelical and ecumenical churchmanship of Professor

Carnegie Simpson, D.D., who had to his credit a monumental life of Principal Rainy and the best-selling *The Fact of Christ* which made him the indispensable speaker for many years at student conferences. Both Scott and Simpson became elders in St Columba's; one of Simpson's remembered gifts was his ability with his colourful oratory and admonitory finger to overcome all the alleged acoustic pitfalls of the new church.

This cohabitation in the College and in St Columba's of the two traditions, the dogmatic and the philosophical, the liberal and the traditional, has not always been easy, as it has not been in the Church as a whole. The traditionalist sees himself as the custodian of a faith once delivered to the saints; the philosophical theologian sees himself as the seeker of a faith which will win the free and intelligent allegiance of head and heart.

An impressive attempt to reconcile the two strands was made in 1904 by Donald MacAlister who had been Senior Wrangler and Smith's Prizeman and was by now a Doctor of Medicine and a Fellow and Tutor of St John's College; he was an eminent mathematician and medical researcher and had shown administrative gifts which would soon lead him to the Principalship of Glasgow University, the Presidency of the General Medical Council, and eventually to a knighthood, a baronetcy and thirteen further doctorates. He had also married Edith, a daughter of Professor Macalister, and he was an elder of St Columba's. In 1904 he addressed the Cambridge University Presbyterian Association which had been founded by his father-in-law in 1883 and he told the students that the aim of the congregation in St Columba's was to make it a home which would draw out the loyalty of its members. Students came from their homes and home churches and were transplanted into a new soil in Cambridge. They would find in St Columba's 'an air all for free enquiry, for tentative discussion of everything in men and nature and this air you should breathe freely'. Yet the Christian Church clung to some certainties; this might seem a bias but 'loyalty to good seen and known is a bias for which the freest spirit may be thankful'. He preferred to call it ballast rather than bias; it kept the church on an even keel; if it was called prejudice then it was a prejudice in favour of the upright position. Changing his metaphor from the sea to the mountains, he said that the mountaineer never lost his grip on one part till he was perfectly sure he had found a firm hold; a foothold was a vantage point from which to move cautiously to a higher. Students were sent to Cambridge to climb upwards, to make progress, to gain a wider outlook, to grow surer of themselves and to become fitter to guide others. Proving all things also had to go along with a holding fast of what had been received. Loyalty was a dictate of gratitude, a counsel of prudence, a condition of safety, a principal of progress, a

beginning of wisdom. In the Hebrew tradition loyalty was seen as loyalty, not to abstractions, but to home, family, nation and a person. Britons found it easier to be loyal to the person of the monarch, 'idealized if you will', than to the British Constitution or the British Parliament, or 'even the House of Lords'!! In the widest field of all, God has met this need for a personal focus of loyalty in Christ, 'the perfect Master and the perfect Friend'. Loyalty to him was the way to 'sure-footed advance to higher vision and to ampler hope and to nobler living'. This was no poetic rhapsody but verified experience. 'An Oxford man described Oxford as the home of lost causes and impossible loyalities. We pray that here in Cambridge you will find in St Columba's a home indeed whose cause is one that can never be lost, where loyalty is not only possible but inevitable'.

The same tension will also appear in the discussions in the Session about the desirability of using a creed or affirmation of faith in the church services and about the methods of fulfilling the duty of evangelism in the university and the city.

Nevertheless, the congregation which had its origins in 1879 has retained, perhaps even unknown to itself and unwittingly, a presbyterian ethos with a respect for traditional presbyterian ways of conducting business. This anchorage was signified by the very name given to the church. In the early days in the new church the need of a name was felt. Much was to be said for the name of St Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland, but the name had been preempted by the neighbouring parish church. In November 1893 the Presbytery approved the name of St Columba, 'the presbyter-apostle of Iona'.

Elders of St Columba's have taken a leading part in Presbytery and Assembly business. Presbytery visitations have been made to the church at regular intervals. In 1969 the Session noted with pleasure the general assessment made by the visitors but 'was somewhat concerned that there appeared nothing that the Visitation was prepared to criticize'. Since the formation of the United Reformed Church in 1972 there has been one visit by the District Council which replaces the Presbytery. The visitors found that close as was Emmanuel Church St Columba's had still a distinctive work to perform in the city centre. The District includes many small churches and, to many of the visitors, St Columba's, even with its problems, seemed incredibly endowed with personnel and resources.

THE MEMBERSHIP OF ST COLUMBA'S

The ministers and the elders occupy an important place in the story of St Columba's but the Church is the whole company of the people who have been associated with one another in the life and work of the congregation and who have met week by week for the worship of God. Leaders can only lead when there are people willing to be led and in Cambridge the congregation from the beginning has had a remarkable variety of members and has seen a continual stream of people coming and going year by year.

The pioneers of the congregation had a strong loyalty to their presbyterian heritage but once the venture was launched many were drawn into the fellowship who had no presbyterian background. However, the congregation was organised on firm presbyterian lines and when it matured into a recognized presbyterian church in 1892 the Session henceforth kept a careful eye on admissions into the membership.

Baptism was administered to infants who were presented by their parents. The minister reported all cases of impending baptism to the Session and where one or both parents were members of the church the baptism took place in the presence of the congregation, usually at a morning service. Occasionally a child neither of whose parents was a member was presented for baptism and in these cases the minister was empowered to baptise the child in the home or in the presence of the Session; the records do not specify whether or not the parents were themselves even baptised. In 1908 the Session declared that at least one parent must be a church member before a child could be baptised. This has been the general policy of the Session but there have been cases where the membership of even one parent has been extremely tenuous and a judgement of charity has usually been made. With the great mobility of members it has always been difficult to follow up the story of those who have been baptised and only a small minority of members of St Columba's has been baptised in St Columba's.

A surprising number of adults have been baptised. Some of these, though from a presbyterian background, had not been baptised in infancy. Others have been students who first came to a Christian faith in Cambridge and then asked for baptism. A cosmopolitan city like Cambridge brings together many whose background has not been that of traditional Christianity.

Reception into full membership and admission to the Holy Communion has been an important and frequent event in the life of the congregation. Some have been brought up in the congregation and have been prepared by the ministers. Some have been students, also prepared by the ministers.

Other students transferred their membership from their home congregation and became full members of St Columba's during their stay in Cambridge. This was a steady source of membership until the Second World War but thereafter students have tended to leave their formal membership in their home churches and while in Cambridge have become a more floating constituency; even while very active in the life of St Columba's many have not become members. In 1962 the minister reported that about one hundred and sixty students were in touch with St Columba's but nothing like that number were members. The lists of student members throughout the years yield many names of people who became well-known in later life. Robert Knox McElderry came from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and later became Professor of Greek in Queen's University, Belfast. In 1898 Charles Thomson Rees Wilson of Sidney Sussex College transferred his membership from his home church in Midlothian and he remained a member until his death in 1960; he became one of Cambridge's most distinguished scientists, being the Jacksonian Professor of Natural Philosophy from 1925 to 1934, and he was honoured with a Nobel Prize for his work in physics and he was honoured by many universities; he was a doctor of Laws and of Science many times over, as well as being a Fellow of the Royal Society and a Companion of Honour. Gerald R. Cragg came from Canada and then recrossed the Atlantic to become a professor at Andover-Newton Seminary and to attain eminence as a seventeenth-century historian. Graham N. Stanton came from New Zealand and remained in this country and has recently become the Professor of the New Testament in King's College in the University of London. George Garfield Hall came from Ireland and became a Fellow of St. John's College and for some time he was Treasurer of St Columba's until his appointment to a Lecturership in London; he is now the Professor of Mathematics in Nottingham University. Dr Helen Megaw, another Irish Presbyterian, was admitted to membership of St Columba's in 1955 and she insisted on retaining her membership in Ireland; this was approved on condition that her Irish Church had no objection to this divided allegiance; she has been a Fellow of Girton College and was a University Lecturer until her retirement in 1977 when she returned to Ireland.

There were others who came to the University fully-fledged at Oxford and at other universities and they joined the ranks of university teachers. For example, Professor Thomas Middleton became a church member in 1903; the Church, perhaps over-eager to recruit academic stars to the Session, put forward his name as a nominee for the eldership but he indicated he did not wish to be considered; nevertheless, he remained a faithful member during his five years in Cambridge. He had come to Cambridge after holding professor-

ships in India and in Durham and in 1907 he began a distinguished career as a top civil servant in the Department of Agriculture and he ended his career as Sir Thomas Middleton, K.C.I.E., K.B.E., LL.D., D.Sc., F.R.S. Professor J.T. Wilson, M.A., LL.D., succeeded Professor Macalister in the chair of Anatomy and he too became a member of St Columba's; he was a Scot from Monavie in Dumfriesshire and had been the Professor of Anatomy in Sydney from 1890 to 1920; he was professor in Cambridge until 1934. A more recent university dignitary who was a member of the church was Sir William Hodge, the Lowndean Professor of Astronomy and Geometry and the Master of Pembroke College; he was laden with honours from many universities and with prizes and medals from many learned societies and he died in 1975. In 1944 Professor H.S. Kirkcaldy came to Cambridge as the Professor of Industrial Relations; he had been a member of St Columba's, Pont Street, London, and his membership was transferred to St Columba's, Cambridge, and in 1953 some members nominated him for the eldership; nothing came of this and as he rose to the Vice-Presidency of Queens' College his links with St Columba's became ever more tenuous and he became a regular worshipper in his college chapel.

The opening of Westminster College brought many ministerial students to the roll of members. Principal W.A.L. Elmslie and Principal R.D. Whitehorn were active members in their student days and Elmslie was for a time superintendent of the Sunday School. Professor J.C. O'Neill was a member during his time as a research student and Professor M.H. Cressey was a member during his period as a student and as tutor in the College. In the early decades of this century the students on the roll stand out like a miniature General Assembly of later years. By the nineteen-thirties even ministerial students kept their membership in their home churches; Principal A.G. MacLeod was active in the affairs of the church in his student days but he was not formally a member.

The hospitality now shown to all students in college chapels has made it unnecessary for nonconformists to advertise their nonconformity by a declaration of membership in a local church or to see St Columba's as a haven from Anglican pressure.

Some members have been in a class by themselves. Such were the famous and erudite twins, Mrs Agnes Lewis and Mrs Margaret Gibson, who came to live in Cambridge, built a mansion called 'Castlebrae', and by their kindness, generosity and learning, made an indelible mark upon the life of the church. They were Scots brought up in the United Presbyterian Church in Irvine in Ayrshire. Amazingly gifted as linguists and intrepid in their travels, especially in the Sinai peninsula to St Catherine's monastery, they became international

authorities on ancient biblical manuscripts and were honoured by many universities.

There were also some recruits to the membership through transfers from other denominations. Dr John Holland Rose, D.Litt., and his family left Emmanuel Congregational Church and joined St Columba's and in 1921 he was elected to the Board of Management. He was a prolific writer in the field of Naval History and he became the Vere Harmsworth Professor of the subject at Cambridge. There was a surprisingly steady stream of transfers from the Church of England; some joined upon marriage to Presbyterians but others apparently for personal reasons, among which was a reaction against the ritual changes in some Anglican churches in the train of the Oxford Movement. Two have been received from the Church of Rome, Bernard James Fennessy in 1945, and, in 1960, Mrs Buchan, the wife of a member of St Columba's.

In addition to members there have been adherents and people on the fringe of the congregation who have been drawn by bonds of friendship, of interest, or of respect for the presbyterian form of service. They may not have wished to take the step of a public profession of faith or they may not have wished to make a formal break with another denomination. For example, there was Professor J. Couch Adams, Sc.D., D.C.L., F.R.S.; he was of Cornish descent and had no presbyterian roots. He came to Cambridge and was Senior Wrangler in 1843 and became a Fellow of St John's and then of Pembroke College. He was appointed to the professorship of Mathematics in St Andrews but returned to Cambridge one year later to be the Lowndean Professor of Astronomy and gained worldwide fame for his location of the planet Neptune. He refused a knighthood and the office of Astronomer-Royal. He was attracted to St Columba's through his friendship with his medical doctor, Dr Donald MacAlister, and he attended the services in the Guildhall. After his death in 1892 the oak organ screen in the new church was given by Dr MacAlister as a memorial to Adams. Memorials to him were also erected in Westminster Abbey and Truro Cathedral.

The large annual turnover of members meant that membership never made sensational advances. In many years, over twenty were received into membership, but almost as many departed. There have also been occasional purges of the roll to eliminate names of those who seemed to slip from the life of the congregation and to leave without formal certification. In January 1899 the roll was purged of twenty-nine members, leaving one hundred and twenty-seven on the roll and though twenty-seven were added in the course of the year further removals left the number on the roll at the end of the year at one hundred and thirty-nine. The membership crept upwards to two

hundred and in 1961 reached three hundred and nineteen, and then steadied around two hundred and fifty. In 1969 the Session noted a drop in membership, largely due to the drying up of a supply of new members from the young people of the church. This is a marked feature of recent years when many young people are hesitant about committing themselves to a faith and practice such as the Church expects. So, while there are as many people about the church and numbers attending the services are well maintained the roll has somewhat shortened and from a membership of two hundred and eighty-two in 1971 it has changed to two hundred and twenty-one in 1977.

THE ELDERS OF ST COLUMBA'S

In the formative years from 1879 to 1893 the project for a Presbyterian Church in Cambridge was under the control of the Oxford and Cambridge Committee of the Synod and also of the Presbytery of London. Yet without local leaders there would have been no project to control. When the new building was opened in 1891 and a congregation set up within the Presbytery in 1892 it was natural that the Presbytery should appoint Professor Macalister and the Rev John Fordyce as the first local members of Session. When the congregation held an election of elders in 1894 Macalister and Fordyce received a massive vote of confidence and with them was elected James Rae. Fordyce left Cambridge in 1896 and Rae in 1901. Rae was given a farewell address which saluted him as a founding father who have been a sponsor of the services in the Guildhall. In 1896 a further election took place. At the top of the poll was Dr Donald MacAlister of St John's College who secured fifty-seven votes. Hugh Porter of Elfleda House, Cambridge, followed with forty votes and then came William Riach Cassie and Enoch Circuit, the Church Officer, with twenty-one votes each. Porter was the son of the Rev Hugh Porter, the minister of New Row Presbyterian Church in Coleraine in Ireland, and he had gone into the linen and drapery business in Belfast and in Leeds and in 1885 he came to Cambridge as a partner in the new company which took over the business of Robert Sayle; he became a Justice of the Peace and a Deputy Lieutenant and was involved in local government, in the insurance business and in many charitable societies; when he died in 1898 his remains were taken back to Ireland to be buried with those of his father who had died at the early age of twenty-nine. Cassie was born in Fraserburgh and after gaining a First Class Honours degree in Aberdeen he entered Trinity College, Cambridge; he was the fifth Wrangler in 1884 and then gained the Clerk Maxwell Studentship which he held until his appointment in 1893 to be Professor of Physics at Holloway College. He had succeeded Professor Macalister as the superintendent of the Sunday School but he gave up this work when he became a professor but he continued to live in Cambridge and was an elder from his election in 1896 until 1901 when he left Cambridge; he died in 1908. Circuit continued to be an elder until his death in 1928. MacAlister continued to be an elder until his appointment to be Principal of Glasgow University; after his retirement from Glasgow he resumed his office as an elder and continued until his death in 1934.

With the advent of Westminster College to Cambridge in 1899 the members of the Senatus were inevitably considered as possible elders.

Principal Dykes refused to allow himself to be nominated as did the College Bursar, John Smieton, who in his youth had been an ordinand in Scotland but whose health had made it impossible for him to undertake the work of the ministry. Professors Skinner and Gibb were given a magnificent vote, Skinner heading the poll with sixty-six votes. Third, with thirty-five was Alfred I. Tillyard, M.A., J.P., a classical scholar and a barrister who devoted himself to civic and educational affairs in the city of Cambridge and became the Mayor. In 1902 John Robert Roxburgh, M.A., LL.B., an elder of the United Free Church, was associated with the Session; he was a Cambridge graduate, an athlete, a lawyer, a man of means, and he succeeded Smieton as Bursar of Westminster College; in 1903 he was elected to the eldership by the congregation. He received seventy-five votes, a number exceeded only by that of Herbert C. Coulson who received seventy-eight. In 1916 Roxburgh became joint clerk of Session along with Professor Macalister and in 1919 on the death of Macalister he became the sole clerk. Also elected in 1903 were the Rev Islay Burns, Albert Ivatt and Edmund Taylor Whittaker. Burns was the tutor at Westminster College. Ivatt, a member of Christ's College, was the technical adviser and chemist in the Chivers firm at Histon. Whittaker was brought up in the Church of England and he became a Presbyterian in Cambridge; he was a Fellow of Trinity College and, like Donald MacAlister, had been Senior Wrangler and First Smith's Prizeman; he remained an elder until his departure in 1906 to become the Astronomer-Royal for Ireland. In 1912 he became the Professor of Mathematics in Edinburgh and held that office until 1946; he died in 1956 by which time he had become Sir Edmund Whittaker, F.R.S., LL.D., D.Sc.

In 1907, as a step to the integration of the work of a Mission in York Street into the life of the congregation Alexander Wood and John Mitchell were elected to be elders in St Columba's. Mitchell was the Superintendent of the Mission and he later became a minister. Wood was a scientist specialising in the field of acoustics; he was a Fellow of Emmanuel College and a Doctor of Science of Glasgow University. He was also a keen supporter of the Labour Party and he became an Alderman of the city of Cambridge. His memory is kept alive in the city by a road which bears his name and the Labour Party Hall also bears his name. He became Clerk of Session in 1934 and he was involved in every branch of the church's work. He was always ready for new ventures and in 1922 he dissented strongly from the decision of the Session that there were no sufficient grounds to justify the admission of women to the ministry.

In 1908 Professors Oman and Anderson Scott were asked to allow themselves to be nominated for election to the eldership but both refused. In

1912 Coulson resigned from the Session; this news was received with regret and his letter of resignation alleged that there was a tension in the Session but there is no hint of this in any other record; he hoped that 'the unhappy divisions that have existed in our Session for about the last seven years may be healed'; he felt that these divisions had been a matter for reproach and an injury to the spiritual life of the Church. He asked that his reasons be not communicated to his family. He nevertheless remained active in the Church and after his death in 1920 a brass plate was erected in his memory.

In 1913 an election placed Professor Anderson Scott at the head of the poll with seventy-one votes; in 1920 he took charge of Regent Square Church in London and asked to be relieved from the eldership; he was re-elected in 1922 but refused to resume the office. In 1925 in response to a further strong vote in his favour he once again took up the office and held it until his death in 1941. Professor Oman received many votes in 1913 and again in 1928 but he felt that he could not do justice to the office along with his other duties.

Hugh Harold Porter, a son of Hugh Porter, was also elected in 1913 and he remained an elder until his death in 1942. After graduation at Christ's College he had become history master at the Leys School in 1909 but some years later he turned to private coaching in Cambridge; after the First World War he became a college lecturer in History at Christ's College. He was a brother of Samuel Lowry Porter who became a Lord of Appeal and was also a member of the congregation and was for a time on the Committee of Management. Also elected in 1913 was W.A.L. Elmslie, a licentiate of the Church and at that time a Fellow of Christ's College; his home was in Cambridge where his mother had set up house after the untimely death of Professor W.G. Elmslie who had been on the staff of the Presbyterian College while it was still in London. Elmslie remained an elder until 1918 when he became the minister of St John's Church, Kensington. Thomas Ormiston, the butler of Christ's College, and J. Stanley Ellis were also ordained in 1913. Ormiston remained an elder until his death in 1937. Ellis was notable for his work among the young and he was an elder until he went on missionary work and became a missionary elder of the Presbyterian Church.

In 1922 another election took place. After a brief ministry in Kensington, Elmslie had returned to Cambridge as a professor in Westminster College and he was elected in 1922 at the head of the poll, but he resigned in 1925 because of the pressure of other duties. Mackie Craig was elected at the same time; he was already an elder in the Church of Scotland; after two years his business took him away from Cambridge.

In 1928 Dr Anderson Scott, George Fyfe, John Samuel King and William Marshall Smart were elected. Fyfe died in 1960. Dr Smart was on the staff of the University Observatory and he resigned from the eldership in 1938.

In 1934 Professor R.H. Strachan, a former minister of the Church and by now at Westminster College, was elected as were Dr Laird, Dr Alexander Stewart Watt, James McKay and Frederick Miller. Miller died in 1958. Dr Laird, the Medical Officer of Health, was an active elder until he left Cambridge in 1956 when he was presented with a briar pipe; he died in 1961. Dr Watt became a Fellow of the Royal Society in recognition of his researches into forestry; he has now retired from the eldership but remains a member of the congregation. Professor Elmslie was re-elected but he refused to accept the office again. At this time the first move was made towards the election of a woman elder. Lady MacAlister received a heavy vote but the idea of a woman elder was still a novelty and she did not consent to be ordained. However, the idea had been planted but it took fourteen years to come to fruition with the election of four ladies.

In 1938 one of the most distinguished of medical missionaries, Dr J Preston Maxwell, came to live in the Cambridge area. His father, Dr James Maxwell, had been the first English Presbyterian medical missionary and had founded the Medical Missionary Association. Preston Maxwell had entered into this heritage and had been ordained as a missionary elder in 1898 and had served for forty years in the Far East, and for half of these forty years he had been a professor in Peking Union Medical College and he had been honoured by the Chinese government with the Order of the Splendid Jade. He joined St Columba's and he was immediately elected to the eldership and in 1948 he celebrated the golden jubilee of his ordination. When he died in 1961 many tributes were paid to his work as a missionary and a medical pioneer.

In 1941 four elders were elected. Professor Farmer held office until his departure from Cambridge in 1960. Rev Robert Calder Gillie, D.C.L., was a former Moderator of the General Assembly who had retired to Cambridge; he died in the same year as his election. Professor William Keith Chambers Guthrie, Litt.D., F.B.A., was a distinguished classical scholar who had become the Laurence Professor of Ancient Philosophy and the Public Orator of the University of Cambridge; he was clerk of Session from 1947 to 1957 when he became Master of Downing College; he remained an elder until 1963 when he resigned. He remains a member of the congregation. James Alexander Gordon Haslam was the fourth to be elected; his career included war service for which he was awarded the Military Cross and the Distinguished Flying Cross and he was for a time a Fellow of Corpus Christi College. He held

office until 1953 when he resigned in order to prepare for entry into the ministry in the Church of England.

In 1946 Professor R.A.S. Macalister, the son of Professor Alexander Macalister, retired from his position as the Professor of Celtic Archaeology in University College, Dublin, the city in which he had been born. He had been one of the most distinguished Oriental archaeologists of his generation but he also found time to become a scholar with an international reputation in the field of Celtic studies. He also had the distinction of being one of the few if not the only presbyterian member of the staff of the National University of Ireland up to that time. During his years in Ireland he had been an outstanding elder in the congregation in Adelaide Road Church and on the floor of the General Assembly. He was also a well-known musician and had been the first organist in St Columba's, and he was the organist in Adelaide Road Church in Dublin. During his time in Ireland he became an Associate of the Royal College of Organists and he was a member of the Committee which produced the Revised Church Hymnary in 1927. Among his published works was *Suite in D Minor for Piano and Violin* (1927). His leonine head made him a striking figure in any company. When he retired to Cambridge it was inevitable that for family and personal reasons he was asked to join the Session and he remained an elder until his death in 1950.

A further election took place in 1948. One named Macmillan left Cambridge a few months after his election. Frederick Drake, the organist, and Dr D.B. Cruikshank were elected. The four elected ladies were Mrs Dorothy Male, Mrs Marjorie Steen, Mrs Marie Rogers and Miss Nancy Gillie. Miss Gillie, the daughter of Dr R.C. Gillie, died in 1953. Mrs Male was the daughter of Thomas Ormiston, already an elder, and she had been among the first to be baptised in the new church. She was one of the Church's best known members and she was active in its work until her death in 1975. Mrs Rogers had a wide experience of missionary work and, though retired from the eldership since 1963, she retains her deep interest in the work of the Church. Mrs Steen, the daughter of Dr Preston Maxwell, is a member of the Elders' Meeting at the present time. Cruikshank was an elder until 1955; he died in 1963.

In 1951 William Nisbet and Arthur Forsdyke were elected. Nisbet left in 1956 to reside in Berwick-on-Tweed and Forsdyke died in 1968. Forsdyke was a link with the York Street Mission where several Forsdykes were active members.

In 1954 Douglas M. Dunlop was elected and the women were reinforced by the election of Mrs Constance Whitehorn, the wife of Professor Whitehorn of Westminster College. Dunlop became Clerk of Session in 1957 and held

the office till 1963 when he became the Professor of Arabic at Columbia University, New York, but he retained his links with Cambridge and his presence in St Columba's was part of the congregation's summer landscape. He has now retired from his professorship and has returned to Cambridge. Mrs Whitehorn retired in 1969; she died in 1976, to be followed a few weeks later by her husband.

In 1956 T. Ainslie Russell was elected; he was already a presbyterian elder and he became the Clerk of Session in 1963. Russell Patterson was also elected and he remained an elder until 1958. Dr Helen Megaw was also elected in 1956 and continued to be an elder until her return to Ireland in 1977. She was joined in 1958 by Miss Mary Anderson Scott, a daughter of Professor Anderson Scott, and at the same time E.G. Roe, Edward Baldock and James Hodge were also elected. Miss Anderson Scott resigned in 1968 and Baldock in 1961. Hodge became chairman of the City magistrates.

In 1961 an election resulted in the addition of Alexander Baxter, Don Horton, Leslie Hughes, Ian Ormiston Male, Thomas Rees Evans and Frederick Moffat. This election illustrated the sources from which many of the members of the Church were drawn. Male, a civil servant, followed his mother and grandfather into the Session and is one of the few who can claim a third-generation connection with the Church. Baxter is a Scot and he came to Cambridge as the railway stationmaster. Don Horton is English and came to Cambridge as a police inspector. Leslie Hughes, a government veterinary official, and Thomas Rees-Evans, a Fellow of Wolfson College, came from Wales. Moffatt, another Scot, resigned in 1963 due to pressure of work and he died in 1974. Leslie Hughes became the Clerk of Session in 1967 and by his devotion to the Church and his genuine interest in every member he came to hold an outstanding place in the esteem of the whole congregation. He retired from the Clerkship in 1975 but continued as an elder until his sudden death in 1976.

In 1964 Mrs Mary I. Healey, the wife of Professor Healey of Westminster College, and Miss Hazel Day, a former Presbyterian deaconess and now a social worker, were elected, as were John Hinds, A. Fenwick Kelly, Frank R. Scott and William A. Marshall. Mrs Healey resigned from the Session in 1974. Miss Day's work took her from Cambridge to Bristol in 1966 but she returned to Cambridge in 1971 and was re-elected to the eldership in 1973. John Hinds became a candidate for the ministry in 1966 and he has been a minister in the north of England since 1968. Marshall resigned in 1972.

In 1966 Mrs Dilys Davies, Mrs Helen Sporne, Allan Gray, Charles Rodger and the Rev Dr John Hick were elected. Mrs Davies was the wife of a Welsh Presbyterian minister who had died at an early age; she remained an elder

until she left Cambridge in 1972. Mrs Sporne is of New Zealand origin. Rodger was already an elder and he has represented the church on the District Council of the United Reformed Church since its formation in 1972. Dr. Hick was a University Lecturer in the Philosophy of Religion; his brief tenure of the eldership ended in 1967 when he moved to be the H.G.Wood Professor of Theology at Birmingham University. Allan Gray soon returned to his native Scotland.

Three further elders were added in 1969; they were Mrs Margaret MacLeod, the wife of Principal Alan MacLeod of Westminster College, William Tripp, and Alex Buchanan who succeeded Leslie Hughes as the Clerk of Session in 1975.

The first election after the formation of the United Reformed Church in 1972 took place in 1973 when, in addition to Miss Day, Kenneth Broadribb, Robert Brown, David Thomas and Professor R. Buick Knox were elected. Broadribb was on the staff of W.H. Smith and Company and he was transferred to Oxford in the same year. Miss Day's background is English Presbyterianism, but Brown came from Scottish Presbyterianism, Thomas from Welsh Presbyterianism and Knox from Irish Presbyterianism. Here was continuing witness to the place of St Columba's Church as a home for the widespread presbyterian family.

In 1974 Mrs Betty Fraser, Ph.D., and Miss Helen Barclay, a daughter of a former minister, were elected. Miss Barclay is on the staff of the Social Services and she was transferred to York in 1976. A further election in 1976 resulted in the election of Robin A. Foulkes and Herbert Eggo. Foulkes has worked in many parts of the world and had been an elder in Rathgar Church in Dublin. Eggo's practical skills have been of great service to the Church.

The frequent changes in the eldership were evidence of the mobility which is a feature of the whole life of St Columba's. Just when elders have been getting a grasp of the life and work of the Church their work often takes them from Cambridge. This is a loss to the Church, but the mobility also brings new people, new talents, new enthusiasm to the Church. Throughout the years St Columba's has been able to draw upon a remarkable wealth of experience and diversity of gifts. In the present company of elders there are members with gifts of business and public service and there are others involved in teaching and administration in Colleges and institutions associated with the City and its University.

A. Halliday Douglas

The opening of the new church in 1892 was followed in March 1893 by the induction of the first minister, Rev. A. Halliday Douglas, M.A., who came from the Free Church Presbytery of Strathbogie. He had distinguished himself in philosophy and English literature at Edinburgh University and he had been a Cunningham Fellow at New College.

In his sermons he dealt with solid doctrinal themes and responded to the intellectual climate of the congregation and also probably helped to create the climate of serious wrestling with the profundities of the faith. In one series of sermons he expounded Christianity as a reality, a history, a person, a belief, a theory of life, an ideal and a salvation. In another he expounded the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, Salvation, Atonement, Forgiveness and new life in Christ. Indeed, his massive treatment of his texts was too intense even for Mrs Lewis and Mrs Gibson who suggested that he might lighten his material by the use of illustrations and for the purpose they presented him with an encyclopedia of illustrations but this made no impression upon his sermons. It was said that in all his nine years ministry he only used an illustration on three occasions, and these occasions were memorable in that it was the same illustration on each occasion.

During his ministry noted preachers were invited from Scotland. Among Free and United Presbyterian Church preachers were Professors George Adam Smith, Marcus Dods and A.R. MacEwen. From the Church of Scotland came the Very Rev Alexander Stewart of St Mary's College, St Andrews, Professor A.H. Charteris of Edinburgh University, Dr P. McAdam Muir of Glasgow Cathedral and Dr Donald Macleod of St Columba's Church, Pont Street, London. Among English Presbyterians was Dr John Watson, a best-selling author under the name of Ian Maclaren and also just fresh from his whirlwind tour of English Presbyterians to collect the £15,000 which enabled Westminster College to be opened free of debt.

In 1901, Douglas intimated to the Session that personal difficulties might force him to resign as minister of St Columba's and the Session offered him 'their heartfelt sympathy'. His health was failing but later in the year he felt well enough to accept a call to be a professor in the Toronto college of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, but he died in 1902.

G.A. Johnston Ross

The search for a new minister began under the guidance of Professor Skinner as Interim-Moderator. The Oxford and Cambridge Committee gave the congregation a free hand in calling a minister, reserving only a right of veto if the Committee judged the congregation's choice unsuitable for the special work in Cambridge. The congregation did not set its sights low. It listed the leading lights of the Scottish Churches and then addressed a call to John Kelman of New North United Free Church, Edinburgh. Kelman was at the height of his power as a preacher and had a magnetic power over student audiences and was to have a distinguished career as preacher and teacher in the United States of America. He refused the call and the congregation then called the Rev G.A. Johnston Ross, M.A., who, after a ministry in Scotland, had become minister of St Paul's Presbyterian Church, Westbourne Grove, London. He was a gifted preacher who drew a congregation which filled the church every Sunday morning in term time. The late Dr Frazer-Hurst, minister of Elmwood Church in Belfast, recalled how in his student days in Westminster College he was thrilled by the preaching of Ross; 'until I heard this remarkable man I had no idea of the heights which can be reached by a great preacher'; 'as a jeweller might take a diamond and turn it about so that from every facet there darted rays of light, so he could take an idea and present it in so many different ways and with such telling phrases that it seemed absolutely new'. Professor Jenkins of Bangor also recalled the preaching of Ross; it was good and learned and was often laced with pearls of Greek. Jenkins thought the Greek references were overdone and he once complained to a member of St Columba's about the surfeit, only to get the reply, 'There are congregations in which it would be pedantry to quote Greek, but here it would be pedantry not to'!

During term time Ross also drew a steady stream of listeners for his series of Bible Lectures on Tuesdays at 5 p.m.; among the titles of his series were 'The Story of the Bible', 'The Founding of the Kingdom of God', 'The first Interpreters of Jesus', 'The Growth of the New Testament', and 'The Heart of St Paul'. He also conducted through several terms services on Wednesday evenings. He commended himself to the Lewis and Gibson twins and lived in a house called 'Iona' which they bought and enlarged for his convenience. They regretted this expenditure which they said they would not have undertaken if they had thought Ross would have left so soon, as he did in 1909; however, they presented the house to the church to be the manse. During his ministry, Scottish preachers still came to visit St Columba's. The Right Rev Mitford Mitchell, a Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, was among the visitors. Rainy came once again. Kelman visited

St Columba's for a week during which he gave a series of five addresses and proved that his magnetism over students was not limited to those in Scotland. Dr Campbell Morgan, minister of Westminster Chapel in London and President of Cheshunt College in Cambridge gave a lecture on 'The Portrait of our Lord in the Gospels' for which he provided those attending with an analytical schedule of the subject. Other notable Free Church lecturers were Frederick B. Meyer and Silvester Horne.

Ross raised an issue which has troubled St Columba's across the years, namely, the proper reception to give to the many visitors to the church. Ross held that if they wished they must be allowed to enter and leave the church without having acquaintanceship thrust upon them, but he also held it to be grievous to hear of people coming and missing a word of kindly welcome. He said he would be glad to see any who cared to come to the vestry after service. For one who gave so much of himself in preaching, even this was a considerable gesture; not for him the handshake and greeting to every worshipper!

During his ministry in St Columba's Ross had one strange escapade. Two men, by name Grant and Bowles, called to see him and claimed to be The Unity Brotherhood; they visited him many times and had discussions on religious matters and in the end the two became convinced that Ross's teaching was blasphemous and in May 1907 they wrote to him demanding that he should not preach on the following Sunday and warning that if he did so they would rise and publicly denounce him for 'taking the name of our Lord Jesus upon your lips'. Ross informed the police and a guard was put upon the church and the two were prevented from entering; they informed the police that they would return at the close of the service and denounce Ross as the congregation were leaving. A considerable crowd collected outside and the service was disturbed in any case by members creeping out to the door to see what was happening. However, the police closed in and allowed no demonstration and the crowd dispersed. The two were brought before the magistrates and charged with loitering and causing an annoyance. Ross said that he thought Grant was mentally unhinged; he also admitted that he had refused to give an assurance to the Charity Organisation Society that Bowles was 'deserving of help'. Roxburgh, the Clerk of Session, said that the pair had been annoying the church for six months. Bowles addressed the court and said he had gone to the church to worship God and to denounce Ross 'who is a liar and God knows'. Grant objected to the question about his sanity and said that he had only tried to do what God had commanded and Bowles asserted the time was coming when God would strike Ross dead. The offenders were fined ten shillings each and removed from the court. The

police promised to give Ross and his family protection from further harassment. The local press was able to indulge in headlines such as 'Remarkable case' and 'Strange scenes' in Downing Street.

Ross's standing in the congregation continued to increase and his reputation was spreading far beyond Cambridge. In 1906 he had preached at the meeting of the National Free Church Council on the text 'This God' from Psalm 48, verse 14; a reporter said, 'Seldom has anything thrilled me as this did'. In 1909 he preached the annual sermon for the Colonial Missionary Society in the City Temple. Little wonder there was great dismay in St Columba's Church when he announced in 1909 that he was considering a call to a church in Brynmawr in Pennsylvania. The Session made great efforts to persuade him to refuse the call and it was only after a very long debate in the Presbytery that a very reluctant consent was given to his acceptance of the call to America. The elders of St Columba's had pled earnestly that he should give 'his brilliant gifts and devoted service' to Cambridge but he said that 'for some time I have felt the work here to be beyond my resources in many ways'. After some years in Brynmawr he became the Professor of Practical Theology in the Presbyterian College in Montreal. Then for six years he was on the staff of Harvard University before moving on to a professorship in the Union Theological Seminary in New York. He published several volumes of sermons and also books on prayer and on practical theological issues. His son was killed in the First World War and he himself died in 1937.

Robert Harvey Strachan

Professor Anderson Scott was appointed to be Interim-Moderator and once again the congregation cast its net wide in the hope of catching one of the many able young ministers in Scotland at that time. Among the names mentioned were Dr James Moffat of Bible translation fame, A.B. Macaulay who became a professor in Glasgow, and Hugh Black renowned as a preacher in Edinburgh. None of these encouraged any approach from Cambridge; Macaulay made it plain that 'under no circumstances could he leave Dundee' at that time. More promising was the approach to the minister of Elie United Free Church near St Andrews, Robert Harvey Strachan; a deputation from St Columba's went to Elie to survey the land. Strachan at this time was involved in a mission in Dublin; St Columba's sent Mr Porter and Mr Male to see if he would be a suitable minister for the church; moreover, Stewart Macalister was now in Dublin and was a professor in University College, and there was also in Dublin Edmund Whittaker, the Astronomer Royal, who had been an elder in St Columba's and they too were asked to report. Favourable

reports resulted from both sorties and a call was issued to Strachan with only two votes dissenting. He was inducted in 1910. Though a son of the United Free Church he too invited preachers to St Columba's from both the Free and Established Churches; among them was Dr Wallace Williamson of St Giles' Cathedral who at the time of his visit had become Moderator-designate of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. During Strachan's ministry there occurred the upheaval of the first World War. He went to Abbeville to serve with the YMCA and stayed four months and was reluctantly released to return to Cambridge and then for the rest of the war years he was chaplain to the local military hospital. In his absence, W.A.L. Elmslie, who was by then a licentiate, took charge of the congregation. Strachan's stipend was £350 from St Columba's with £200 from the central Sustentation Fund. In 1918 he received a call from Langside United Free Church in Glasgow and 'by a majority' the Session passed a resolution regretting his departure. He later returned to Cambridge as the New Testament Professor in Westminster College.

Innes Logan

A vacancy committee was set up with Professor Carnegie Simpson as Interim-Moderator. Sir Donald and Lady MacAlister had heard the Rev Innes Logan conduct services in his church in Braemar, and they suggested his name to the committee. This led to a call to Logan in April 1919. He was a minister of the United Free Church and during the War he had been a chaplain to the Scots Guards. He was also a nephew of the distinguished scholar and journalist, Sir William Robertson Nicoll, who attended and spoke at his induction in Cambridge. He lived in a rented house in Parkside, the previous manse, 'Iona' being let to Professor Anderson Scott and eventually sold in 1922 for £3005. This was a depressing time in the life of St Columba's; the congregation had been much dispersed during the war and then after the war the demobilisation of the army meant the departure from Cambridge of the large numbers of soldiers who had helped to fill the church during the war years. Moreover, the recovery of the local church proved to be slow and disappointing. Logan confessed after three years that he had done all he could and he was glad to accept a call from Cathcart United Free Church in Ayr.

George Barclay

Once again Carnegie Simpson was Interim-Moderator and in May 1926 a unanimous call was sent to the Rev George Barclay who had already come from Scotland to Grosvenor Square Presbyterian Church in Manchester. The

process of recovery accelerated during his ministry. Visiting preachers from Scotland again visited St Columba's; the last Moderator of the United Free Church prior to the union of the Churches, the Very Rev J. Harry Miller, preached in 1929. In 1932 came the Rev James Black who had been a notable United Free Church minister and was now minister of St George's West parish Church, Edinburgh. Barclay was known to a wide public through his writings on the Bible and he was made a Doctor of Divinity of Glasgow University. He left Cambridge for North Shields in 1937 and became Moderator of the General Assembly in 1941. He retired to Cambridge in 1952 and died in 1953.

T. Ralph Morton

Under the guidance of Professor Strachan as Interim Moderator, the congregation sought for a new minister. The Rev G.T. Bellhouse of Regent Square Presbyterian Church in London was invited but he refused to accept. The Rev T. Ralph Morton, M.A., was called; he had been on the Irish Presbyterian Mission in Manchuria. His ministry was soon set in the midst of the second World War when once again Cambridge life was shattered; the student numbers were decimated and Cambridge became a transit centre for evacuees, and for military and air force personnel. One of its strangest experiences was to receive hosts of haggard soldiers rescued from Dunkirk; though the survivors of a defeated army they were also heroes and harbingers of recovery. Morton coped with ministering in such a situation until 1943 when he went to work with George MacLeod in the Iona Community. He died in 1977.

Albert S. Cooper

Professor Farmer was appointed Interim-Moderator and among those considered as possible ministers of St Columba's were several future Moderators of the General Assembly, J. Eric Fenn, F.D. McConnell, G.T. Bellhouse and F.G. Healey; the choice eventually fell on Albert S. Cooper who after he had left St Columba's was also to be Moderator of the General Assembly in 1968. Unlike his six predecessors he was both English and a product of Westminster College.

A curious controversy surrounded his advent for it was just at this point that the Oxford and Cambridge Committee of the General Assembly decided that its ancient remit to nominate a minister for St Columba's was still in force. In the calls to Logan, Barclay and Morton, the congregation had taken all the initiatives and the Committee had concurred if indeed it had been consulted at all. Legal minds now pointed out that the congregation's role was to concur in accepting the Committee's nominee; this had not been the

procedure in the three preceding calls and therefore it might have to be ruled that Logan, Barclay and Morton had never been ministers in Cambridge, and if the congregation went ahead and called Cooper his call might also be null and void.

The General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church admitted that the procedure under the Trust Deed was now out of date because since the date of the 1885 Deed the congregation had become a fully constituted church. The ex-legal adviser of the General Assembly, Mr J.P.R. Lyell, rightly claimed that he was 'not without experience in church matters' and he admitted that the old procedure might now appear 'if not monstrous, unfortunate' but the law still stood and until it was changed by the General Assembly it was binding on St Columba's: if it had been ignored in three previous vacancies this was no justification for repeating the offence; 'some church officials', he said, 'like to take short cuts which usually lead to trouble'. Lyell advised the church to take the necessary steps to get the General Assembly and the Charity Commissioners to change the Deed but meanwhile the church must keep the law. The crisis eased when the Committee concurred in the call to Cooper and nominated him as minister of St Columba's and chaplain to presbyterian students. A proposal was made that in future the Interim-Moderator would keep the Oxford and Cambridge Committee informed of the proceedings of the vacancy committee and also be ready to transmit to the vacancy committee any name which the Oxford and Cambridge Committee thought to be worthy of consideration. The secretary of the Committee, the Rev J.L. Cottle, was reluctant to allow the initiative to pass completely into local hands and so he had reservations about the proposed plan. Dr Wood wrote to the Convener, Rev Dr P.B. Hawkridge, regretting Cottle's attitude; St Columba's felt strongly about 'the autonomy of the local congregation, subject to the approval of presbytery, to chose its own minister'. St Columba's, said Wood, recognised the help of the Church as a whole and was ready to allow a veto on appointments but not an initiative; St Columba's was now mature, and since eight of its eleven elders were university members and three were Westminster College professors, it was quite capable of choosing and calling a minister and had a case for complete separation from the Oxford and Cambridge Committee but this was not being asked. After lengthy correspondence and through the mediation of Dr Hawkridge the plan to leave the initiative in the hands of the church while reserving a veto to the Committee was approved. Provision was made for appeal to the General Assembly in case of disagreement.

Cooper came to St Columba's with a wide knowledge of the church and of the city and the university derived from his student days and all this gave

him a background for deciding where his main efforts should lie. He brought his training as a philosopher and theologian to his preaching. He was also interested in the psychological workings of the human mind and the link between mental and bodily disorders and this was intensified by his work as chaplain in Fulbourn Hospital. He tried to interest the people of St Columba's in the efforts to support the less privileged members of society and this was the seed which has developed further in the ministry of his successor. In 1960 Cooper was called to Cavendish Road Presbyterian Church in Leeds.

Ronald D. Speirs

During the vacancy the Interim-Moderator was the Rev F.D. McConnell of Welwyn Garden City Free Church; because of the distance from Welwyn Garden City, Professor A.G. Macleod attended to immediate pastoral duties. The Session instructed McConnell to consult the Oxford and Cambridge Committee at every stage and thus diplomatically avoid any possible repetition of the earlier tension. As a result of his consultations he submitted to the vacancy committee a list of nine names for consideration. The net was once again cast wide, especially among ministers with experience of work among students. For example, James R. Boyd, now a professor in the Presbyterian College, Belfast, Brian McConnell, for long the Presbyterian Dean of Residence in Dublin and a former student at Westminster College, James L. Cottle, a minister with a wide experience in the work of the Student Christian Movement, and Kenneth Slack, the redoubtable ecclesiastical statesman and now the Director of Christian Aid, were among those considered. Boyd and Slack refused to allow the consideration to proceed. McConnell and Cottle were willing to be considered. Many more were considered and many disclaimed any desire to let their names go forward. It was only after long negotiations that there appeared for the first time the name of the Rev Ronald D. Speirs, M.A., B.D., S.T.M., who was then chaplain to the University of St Andrews. Events moved quickly. Mr Speirs preached in St Columba's in March 1961 and was called before the end of the month. His name was the only name put before the congregation; the proposal to extend a call to him was made by Dr Megaw and seconded by Mr Horton. He was inducted in July; he was introduced to the congregation on the Sunday after his induction by the Rev John G. Thornton of St Columba's Church, Oxford, who had been minister of the Martyrs Church in St Andrews. In the church magazine for August-September 1961 the new minister set forth his first message to the people; he said that St Columba's was 'a congregation with an excellent core of dedicated people', but there was much to be done if every single member was to be an 'effective Christian in this very chaotic

world'. So began a ministry which continues at this time of centennial celebrations and is the longest ministry which the church has had in its century of existence.

After the sale of the 'Iona' Manse in 1922, ministers lived for some time in rented houses until the purchase of the house at 46 Lensfield Road. This is a large and conveniently-situated rather than conveniently-appointed house, but as the lease of this house has been approaching maturity the congregation had for some time been eager to secure another house. In 1977, the Lensfield Road house was sold to Downing College for £19,000, and another house in Kimberley Road was purchased for £18,000, and after some alterations and redecoration has now became the Manse.

St Columba's Church

St Columba's Church: the interior before the re-arrangement

St Columba's Church: the interior

Some of those present at morning worship on Sunday, 15 October 1978

The main and abiding reason for the establishing of the church was the provision of weekly worship on lines traditional in Presbyterian Churches and wherein Presbyterians from all over the world would feel at home. From the start the form of worship was the customary sequence of praise, prayer, reading of the word, and the preaching of the sermon. Metrical psalms were regularly sung and also hymns. The book, *Psalms and Hymns for Divine Worship,* published in 1866 with the approval of the Synod, was used. A new edition prepared by J.M.E. Ross, the minister of Frognal, appeared in 1907 under the title *Church Praise* and was used in St Columba's until the *Church Hymnary* of 1927 was adopted. This book was a major presbyterian production and was used until the new edition of 1973 was adopted. An anthem was sung when choral resources permitted. Inevitably, where the minister has so large a part in shaping the content of the services, the imprint of each minister was seen during his ministry but there has nevertheless been a recognizable continuity in the shape of the services.

This does not mean that forms of service have never been questioned or that variations have not been suggested. The Session often discussed suggestions for modifications, alterations and additions, and yet changes were never made lightly or with much enthusiasm, though when changes have been made they have rapidly become established features as hard to alter as they have been to be introduced. In 1951 Cooper suggested that the congregation should be asked to stand as the offering was brought forward but after discussion the Session decided by a majority not to bring such a recommendation to the congregation. During the present ministry Mr Speirs proposed not only that the people should stand for the presentation of the offering but that the offering and the prayers of intercession be placed after the sermon; there are many liturgical precedents for the practice and the suggestion was much discussed in 1961 but no decision was taken at that time. However, the seed had been sown and the practice was introduced and has become established. Among the Session papers are suggestions made by Dr O'Neill for new elements in the form of service; he suggested that parts of the service should be taken from the Table and the Lectern, that a psalm should be recited by the whole congregation, that members should read the lessons and offer the prayers of intercessions, and that people should stand to pray. Some of these ideas have been adopted from time to time but have not become regular parts of the service. In 1965 a questionnaire was circulated to the members asking for opinions about changes in the order of service, but

the fifty replies received showed 'no pronounced desire for change'. It can be presumed that the other two hundred and fifty members who did not reply had even less desire for change. In 1954 Cooper claimed that 'the needs of the present day might call for some radical alterations in the pattern of our church life as traditionally conceived'. In the matter of forms of service continuity has been more marked than change and this can be defended on the ground that it was for this very form of worship that St Columba's was founded.

With the opening of the new church evening services became part of the life of St Columba's. Yet they have posed a continual problem; the attendance has been but a small fraction of the morning congregation. Ministers have often been dispirited as they prepared full forms of service with fresh sermons for so small a gathering. The blessing promised to gatherings of two and three has often seemed more than neutralised by the indifference of the majority. Attempts have been made to vary the time from 6 to 6.30 to 7 to 7.30 to 8.30 and back again and during wartime services were held at 3 or 3.30. In 1928 it was decided to discontinue evening services for six weeks during the long vacation. Cooper sought authority to vary the form of the evening service. On the second and fourth Sundays of the month he planned to have a 'teaching service' or 'study conference' when he would give a twenty-minute introductory exposition to be followed by group and general discussion. This had limited appeal as there were those who were not very vocal and felt flattened by other vociferous speakers. Early in 1949 the very continuance of any evening service was in doubt. Cooper said the attendance was not such as to justify its continuation as an act of corporate worship. It was decided to continue the study conferences and to ask the congregational meeting to approve the replacement of the other evening services by devotional services in the Session room. However, as has so often happened, even those who never attend an evening service like to think that a service is being held and so the services continued. In 1952 Cooper arranged for help in conducting the evening services and he declared that this relief from the evening service showed him what a burden it had been, especially in term time when the students were entertained in the Manse on Sunday afternoons and he had then to go directly to church for the evening service. The relief had come from the students of Westminster College and Cooper suggested that the students could be asked to be responsible for all evening services during term time. The Session was sympathetic to his plea for relief but, as the minutes record, 'in view of the noticeable drop in attendance when the evening services were recently taken by students' the suggestion was not approved. It was later decided to ask them to take the evening services in

the Michaelmas term but to offer no fee. The plan was sufficiently satisfactory to warrant an invitation to continue to take the services in the Lent term, and the students even offered to continue during the Easter term but the Session decided that thereafter the practice be discontinued. At the end of the term the students were thanked for their help but reminded that the arrangement was now at an end.

An attempt to make the evening congregation look more compact was made by the introduction of a curtain halfway up the nave, but this soon lapsed. In 1953 Cooper asked that the use of a curtain be reintroduced but again it apparently fell into disuse and in 1958 Miss Caroline Dobson suggested its reintroduction. Cooper had also asked in 1953 that he be allowed to conduct the service from the Table and this was approved. In 1955 Cooper was again convinced that attendance varying between ten and twenty-five did not justify continuing evening services beyond the end of June. The members of Session undertook to make an individual canvas of the members about their attitude to the evening service; once again it was clear that a great majority wanted an evening service to continue though they had no intention of attending it. The Session decided to continue the services until the end of the year and then to examine the position afresh. There was clearly little hope of increased attendances.

As part of the increasing co-operation with Emmanuel Church, united evening services were launched in November 1968 for a six month trial period. In April 1969 a petition was made by six members asking that the experiment be discontinued and each congregation go its own way except on the last Sunday in the month when a united service should include St Benet's Church and the Fulbourn Hospital Group. Two elders met the petitioners and after discussion they recommended the continuation of the united evening services but with greater continuity of time and place. In July it was decided to meet for three months in each church with some variety in the type of services but having a Communion service on the third Sunday of each month. Coffee would be served and thus make the service a focus of fellowship. The numbers attending have been small; between thirty and fifty out of a combined membership of about six hundred is not encouraging and in 1972 and 1975 there are minutes expressing concern about the future of the services. Yet, for the regular core of attenders along with the visitors who are to be found at most of these services the evening services are a notable part of the life of the church.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper has always been a central feature of the life of the church and there have been many discussions about its frequency and form and about the arrangements for preparing and

distributing the elements. Quarterly celebrations were the practice at the beginning and then in 1919 monthly celebrations were introduced. The first arrangement was to have a celebration on the third Sunday in the month, in the morning during term time and in the evening out of term. Later, the main celebrations were arranged for the morning services on the first Sunday of each month. In 1950 the Session studied Dr W. D. Maxwell's book, *Concerning Worship,* with its advocacy of a weekly celebration; despite Maxwell's claim that this had the backing of the New Testament and of many of the Reformers, the Session decided to make no change. Some members expressed the view that such frequency would lead to undue familiarity and thus devalue the Sacrament. Additional early celebrations have been approved at Easter and Whitsuntide. Private celebrations have not been a major feature in presbyterian church life but in 1896 the Session gave permission to the minister to take the Sacrament to Mr H. Charles, a bed-ridden member. This ministry to the sick and infirm has been continued. In 1956 a portable communion set was provided for the minister's use.

At the beginning the wine was fermented wine and was distributed in chalices. In 1898, the Session decided, in response to 'conscientious scruples on the part of certain members', that there was no objection to the use of unfermented wine and that such wine should be used 'for the present'. In January 1913 Mr Ivatt raised the matter of infection through the use of the common cup and it was suggested that the minister should arrange for the provision of napkins with which the elders could wipe the lip of the chalice at the end of each pew, but in April it was decided by four votes to two not to adopt this practice until after further discussion when new elders had been added to the Session. No change was made until 1924 when Dr Laird proposed the introduction of individual glasses; this step was approved only after long debate, and the purchase of five trays of glasses at £30 was authorised. These changes were not welcome to all members and there have been pleas for a reversion to earlier practice. Overseas members have raised the issue from time to time; Dr Alexander Miller from New Zealand and Mrs Judith O'Neill from Australia, both approached the Session. A request from Mrs O'Neill and some others for a 'common cup' to be available for those who wished to receive in that manner was considered but the Session refused on the ground that this would introduce a new divisive factor into the celebration. Professor Whitehorn expressed a personal preference for the use of the common cup at all the celebrations but was ready to be content with the alternate use of chalices and individual glasses. In 1944 the Session expressed agreement with this suggestion but it was not acted upon. A monthly evening celebration with the common cup and fermented wine was sanctioned in 1969.

The arrangement of the communion vessels on the Table has been much discussed. The first practice was to have the vessels and the elements on the Table from the start of the service, and all covered with a white cloth. This was felt by many to produce a rather shapeless visual image. Experiments were tried with several smaller cloths over the different vessels. In 1952 a plan was put forward for having the elements prepared in the Quiet Room behind the screens and brought forward by the elders immediately before the actual celebration; this did not meet with approval and was speedily dropped. The mechanics were not aesthetically pleasing to some members, while others resented any suggestion that the Communion was a separate service appended to the main service; others were averse to what might be seen as a ritualistic innovation. In 1962 the congregation was persuaded to experiment with the full practice of the 'Great Entrance' when the elements are brought in procession up the nave; this experiment has now become accepted practice.

Variations in the order of reception of the elements have occurred, largely the result of the personal preferences of the ministers. The general custom up to 1948 seems to have been that the elders served the people and then were served by the minister, but Cooper then suggested that the order be reversed and the elders be served first. The minutes of the Session record that it was decided to give the matter careful thought and in the end the idea was adopted.

From time to time the question of a congregational recital of an affirmation of faith, particularly at the Communion service has been raised. The Session devoted many hours to the matter. Some elders have been opposed to any such custom as one alien to the presbyterian tradition as they knew it; others feared the encouraging of vain repetitions; others suspected a move towards the emulation of Anglican habits. Others said that many doctrinal affirmations were more of a hindrance than a help to Christian understanding. In 1965 Dr Watt told the Session that the witness of the Church was impaired because the substance of the faith was obscured by interpretations of the faith belonging to past ages and inconsistent with the present stages of knowledge. Even among those favourable to the idea of a common declaration of faith there was wide divergence on what form should be adopted. Unanimity could not be secured to allow the use of either the Apostles' or the Nicene Creed; some felt that the language was too archaic and others doubted if it was proper to ask the congregation to recite words whose meaning was now imprecise or, as some would have it, unacceptable. Modern formulations of the faith were considered, copies being circulated to members for their consideration. Chief among these was a declaration of faith drawn

up for the Presbyterian Church of England and which was largely the work of Professor Farmer. Even the respect in which he was held did not move the Session to adopt the declaration. He himself was a member of the Session when the issue was raised and even he did not press for its use. Indeed, the Oman tradition was not slanted to the recital of authoritative statements without evidence of a corresponding inward vision of their truth.

At the Communion services it has been the custom to invite all who are members of any branch of Christ's Church to receive the Sacrament. It has not been the practice to use the form of invitation calling all who love the Lord Jesus Christ to partake. Presbyterian practice has been that love of the Lord Jesus is not simply a matter of personal declaration but is a conviction which has to be tested and approved by the whole congregation. This, of course, has divisive overtones and can make a separation among worshippers and among families at the very point which is claimed to be the Communion in a unique sense. Moreover, in an age when formal membership is avoided by many who are otherwise active in the life of the congregation, they are debarred from this service. In 1966 Mrs O'Neill suggested that baptized children should be permitted, indeed encouraged, to be present at the Communion with their parents and also receive the Sacrament but the general feeling of the Session was that, while there was a real difficulty here, the introduction of such a practice would make for a kind of two-tier membership and that therefore none should partake until they had taken the full vows of membership.

THE MUSIC IN ST COLUMBA'S

The forms of worship in St Columba's reflected the general pattern of presbyterian worship; indeed, a leading reason for the gathering of the congregation was to enable Presbyterians to find in Cambridge the form of worship to which they had been accustomed. Moreover, it was also the aim to provide an oasis of simple, edifying and instructive worship in a city filled with many varieties of Anglican worship. Nevertheless, the place of music in the services has been a constant theme in meetings of the Session and of the congregation.

In Guildhall days, the singing was accompanied by an ancient harmonium played by a number of volunteer organists. The new church was furnished with an organ which was the gift of Lady Bruce. It was built by the firm of Lewis and was renovated by the firm of Willis in 1934. A choir was recruited to lead the singing. The first organist was R.A.S. Macalister, then a university student at the beginning of his distinguished career. He played for seven years and was offered 14 guineas for his work during 1894 but he returned this to the building fund. He and the choir formed a choral society.

In 1906 a Miss Johnson became the organist; she was chosen from eight candidates. She was succeeded in 1908 by Mr H.A. Adcock, A.R.C.O., of St Andrew's Church, Watford. His fee was fixed at £40 a year. He continued to run the choral society which in 1909 had a Grand Concert when they sang Elgar's *Banner of St George.* Despite Adcock's undoubted proficiency his relations with the Session were far from comfortable. In 1912 there were rumblings about the need to improve the Psalmody. Roxburgh and Wood interviewed Adcock and reported that he was very amenable to their suggestions. A social evening was arranged when the minister, elders and choir discussed the improvement of the singing. However, the matter rose again in 1914 and in July Adcock was to be asked to 'look out for some other situation within the next three months'. Within those three months the World War broke out and it was decided to suspend the sentence since the turmoil of the times might make it difficult to secure a successor. Yet, not even wartime conditions could make Adcock palatable to the congregation and in April 1916 the minister was instructed to tell him that the Session would release him as soon as he found another position; the message was reinforced in May when Adcock was told that his appointment would terminate on July 31, and 'in the event of his desiring to leave sooner the Session would place no obstacle in the way of his doing so'.

The minister and Ormiston and Roxburgh were asked to seek a successor. Mr Field Hyde was appointed at £40 a year, and he held the position until 1919 when he was succeeded by Mr Robert Fenn who moved to Great St Mary's in 1927. He was replaced by Frederick Drake; he and his wife were members of Emmanuel Congregational Church but they became members of St Columba's and Drake became an elder in 1948; he remained as organist until his death in 1953 by which time his salary had risen to £70 a year.

The only applicant to be his successor was a student called Bishop; he was offered the position on 'a terminal basis' but he decided not to accept. Harry Carrie of Westminster College played during the session 1953–54. Then the name of Eric Impey was mentioned; he was said to be a promising organist and he was at the time organist of Castle Street Methodist Church. He was invited to play at both services on a Sunday in March 1954. In September it was reported to the Session that Impey was willing to apply and he was appointed for a probationary year beginning in January 1955, thus allowing him to give three months notice to Castle Street Church. At the end of 1955 his work was adjudged to be 'entirely satisfactory' and the appointment was made permanent. He became a member of St Columba's on profession of faith, and Mrs Impey was transferred from the Church of England. For over twenty-two years Mr Impey has been the organist. Mr Andrew Armour has given much assistance as a deputy organist.

There have always been attempts to have a choir to lead the singing. A number of paid singers were employed as a nucleus of a choir. At the beginning of the days in the new church £10 yearly was allocated for their payment and this was increased to £22 in 1912 but this provision seems to have been a casualty of the World War. Students formed an element in the choir but this meant a sharp decline in numbers out of term. It has proved difficult to maintain any choir at all since the second World War. Greater mobility has tended to reduce the number of regular worshippers and this applies to choristers also; nothing is so fatal to a choir as spasmodic attendance. In 1956 the Session affirmed the need for a choir but in 1958 it was reported that there were continuing difficulties in recruiting a choir. In 1959 the standard of singing was said to be low and Dr Megaw suggested the holding of a congregational choir practice after the morning service. The Session showed no enthusiasm for the idea but by 1961 was persuaded to try the experiment on two occasions. Mr Horton pled for the use of familiar tunes, especially at evening services, but Mr Russell urged that new tunes should be tackled and suggested that the organist could play the new tunes in their entirety before asking the congregation to sing them. In 1966 it was

suggested that, after consultation with Mr Impey, Miss Robson be asked to be choir leader, but this was not followed up as there was still no choir to lead.

There have also been problems concerning the seating of a choir. At first the pulpit was placed against the back wall of the apse and the choir seats were placed antiphonally on the dais, but when the pulpit was brought forward and flanked by screens the choir had to be found a new setting. One proposal was to range their seats in front of the pulpit, facing the congregation, but the choir unanimously refused to be placed in such a position. Not only would the suggested position require that they should sit with their backs to the minister but it would expose them to the continual scrutiny of the congregation. It was at length agreed that seats in the transepts be positioned at right angles to the seats in the nave and some still bear labels indicating where the four voices should sit. Attempts have been made to resuscitate a choir in recent years, especially by Mr T. Rees Evans. In 1969 a plan to reserve two pews near the back of the church for those willing to come together to help to lead the singing was tried, but modesty, irregular attendance and the intrusion of non-singers discouraged the plan. Skilled musicians, such as the Rev Ray Adams and Dr Noel Lloyd, have shown what might be achieved by a precentor but this has not become a feature of the services. In 1973 three elders were asked to have consultations with Mr Impey about the standard of singing and how it could be improved. The Session again discussed the matter in 1974 but this 'failed to lead to concrete suggestions for the improvement of the singing'. A consultation for interested members was held and out of this emerged a recommendation to adopt the new third edition of *The Church Hymnary* to replace the *Revised Church Hymnary* which had been in use since 1927. A few singers have assembled by times in the choir seats and this has raised the quality of the singing but there has been no revival of a full choir.

In 1963 the minister was allowed to experiment with 'music in the modern style' at a morning service and the experiment has been repeated at intervals.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN ST COLUMBA'S

In 1882 a Sunday School was formed and this met in the Guildhall and continued there until the church was opened. The School met at first in the afternoon. A school at the same time as the church service was then unthinkable for the very good reason that children should worship with their parents and thus become acclimatized to the form and atmosphere of worship from their earliest years. During the years in the Guildhall the number on the roll rose at one point to fifty-three and the average attendance was thiry-five. Teachers were in good supply and at first they were all university men but 'resident ladies' were soon added to the staff. Often there were eight teachers for thirty-two children and further volunteers had to be refused as classes could not usefully be subdivided any further.

When the move was made to the new church classes were held in the church, in the Session Room and in the Vestry. An attempt was made to hold classes before the morning service but this was soon abandoned as was an attempt from 1901 to 1902 to hold children's services at 10.30. By 1898 one hundred and twelve scholars were on the roll. Increasing numbers required the hiring of a room in the nearby Liberal Club for the Primary Department. In 1912 the numbers had increased to two hundred and seventy-one on the roll with an average attendance of one hundred and eighty-two; they were divided into Primary, Junior and Intermediate Departments. Such a number could not have come from homes connected with the church, even allowing for the larger families of those days. St Columba's must have met a social need among the surrounding residents but there is no evidence of the size of the catchment area, nor is there evidence of the extent to which parents were brought into touch with St Columba's by means of the children.

A long succession of elders, of ladies, of members and of people associated with Westminster College have acted as superintendents, leaders of departments, and teachers in the school. Professor Macalister, Mr Cassie, Mr Roxburgh, Mr Mackie Grey, Mr Stanley Ellis and Principal Elmslie were among the elders who acted as superintendents. Mrs Cracknell, Miss Roxburgh, Mrs Lewis, Mrs Gibson, Mrs Anderson Scott, Miss Dorothy Ormiston (later Mrs Male), Miss Sarah Sennitt (later Mrs Gilbert) were among the teachers. Lady MacAlister became a leader in the school in 1929 after her return from Glasgow; in 1950 she wished to retire but agreed to continue on the understanding that Mrs Farmer would be ready to take over the work in the near future. She died within a few months and Mrs Farmer was leader of the work from 1950 to 1960 when she was succeeded by Mrs Helen Sporne.

The work of the school had survived many difficulties. The building of the halls had provided much-needed classroom accommodation but when the halls were taken over for the use of soldiers during the first World War the classes had to revert to the church. This combined with the reduction of the supply of students and the upheaval of customary ways of life was a setback to the work of the school from which it never fully recovered. In 1923 the numbers had so dwindled that it was decided to close the school and concentrate on York Street where the Mission school seemed to have hope of developing. However, such children as were in the congregation were not likely to go to York Street and in 1928 an infants' class was started to run concurrently with the morning service. The Westminster students then tried to run a class for children on Sunday afternoons during term time. Later in 1928, it was decided to try to have classes during the latter part of the morning service; the children would attend the first part of the service and then withdraw for the classes. After the second World War the children's work began to assume the form of the Junior church which has been the pattern up to the present. Mr Ian Male gave valuable help from 1946 to 1957. During Mrs Sporne's leadership the number on the roll rose to seventy-one. She resigned in 1963. Miss Clarke and Mrs Coles then took over the Primary section and Miss Hazel Day the Senior. In 1965 Miss Day was assisted by Mr and Mrs Hinds. In 1965 Dr and Mrs O'Neill offered to lead a group for young people aged fourteen to seventeen. In 1966 there were seventy-one children and eleven teachers on the roll of the Junior church.

In 1966 the Session expressed its concern over the erratic attendance of the children of the Junior church and over the lapse of teenagers from active ties with the church. Mrs O'Neill proposed a new scheme of Lessons for the Junior church and the Session approved expenditure of up to £30 on equipment. In January 1967 Mrs O'Neill undertook to lead the Junior church which she did until 1972 with marked effect upon both interest and attendance. Among the names of helpers in the last decade there can be noted Mrs Lucy Livingston, Mrs Daphne Thomas, Mrs Elizabeth Thomson, Colin Scott and Dr Charles Shearer. The present staff includes Mrs Margaret McKay, Mrs Anne Grubb, Mrs Mona Coles, Ian Morrison of Homerton College, and Dr O'Neill.

The Junior church is still a living part of the work of the church. It has its encouragements in the quality and faithfulness of its teachers and in the sustained number on the roll but neither is it without its difficulties. Its members are now almost entirely the children of members and of people who make St Columba's their place of worship during short periods of work or

study in Cambridge. Since most of these come from a wide area in and around Cambridge the children do not mix with the children whom they meet in day school and in their neighbourhood and it is difficult for them to put down strong roots in the fellowship in St Columba's. One of the most persistent anxieties about St Columba's must be the number of children who have been in its school or Junior church and who have drifted away from any connection with the church or who after being confirmed as full members have lapsed from sharing in the life of the church.

Many societies have risen within the church to provide centres of fellowship and study and these must have influenced many in their time. In 1896 a Girls' Guild was founded and by 1912 it had seventy-nine members and in 1913 the membership had to be restricted to those who were also members of the Sunday School. The Guild gave displays of drilling and of action songs and country dances. Country dances were taught by a Miss Macaulay who was the daughter of an Irish Moderator, Dr William Macaulay of Portadown, and who came in fortnightly from Soham to give lessons. A Young Men's Guild was founded in 1899 but only lasted for two years. A Girls' Club was started in 1908 and by 1912 had thirty-eight members and was intended to help those who were not attracted by the more formal Guild. A Scout troop was founded in 1911 and in its first year had twenty-six members; it survived the World War and continued for many years, especially under the eager leadership of Mr J. Stanley Ellis. The pattern and the pace of life in pre-war days is illustrated by the reports of the Scouts' camping activities. In 1913 nineteen boys set out on an expedition to Hauxton House Farm and camped on the banks of the Granta; as the report put it, the Scouts 'tested the minds of the villagers and were assured that our occupation of the district was not likely to be disputed'. As there was no service in the local parish church on the Sunday morning the boys 'enjoyed the glories of nature in the village lanes'. During the Sunday afternoon Ellis returned to Cambridge 'to civilization' and to conduct his Sunday School class. The camp was honoured by a visit from Professor Macalister. A further camp was held in the late summer at Houghton near St Ives; boys from the Perse School were camping in the neighbourhood and both parties attended the parish church and the Rector invited the two Scoutmasters to give addresses at the evening service. A further expedition made the trek to a camp as far away as Stapleford!

Attempts have been made to coordinate work among the young. A Youth Committee was set up in 1964 on which the Session was represented by Miss Day, Leslie Hughes and William Marshall. In 1970 a Youth Club was founded in Emmanuel Church and young people from St Columba's were invited but

none attended. In 1971 a Youth Council was set up but by 1973 Mr William Tripp reported that there was little enthusiasm for a Youth Club.

The Cambridge University Presbyterian Association founded by Professor Macalister in 1883 was one of the most effective organisations in connection with the congregation. It arranged regular meetings for prayer and for study and a great variety of speakers were invited to talk on theological, missionary and social subjects. The Association owed much to the support of a succession of senior friends among whom may be especially noted Professor Macalister, Dr Wood and Leslie Hughes. The ministers have also been steady supporters and meetings have often been held in the Manse. In the nineteen-twenties about seventy students were in the Manse every Sunday afternoon. Among evening speakers there was William Temple, the future Archbishop of Canterbury, who spoke to the Association in 1908 when he was still an Oxford don; Monsignor Barnes spoke on the teaching of the Church of Rome. Breakfast meetings were held and at one of these the speaker was the spell-binding Irish missionary, Fred O'Neill, and the attendance was said to be the largest in the history of the Association. Students were thus nurtured within a presbyterian fellowship and were also given a vision of the Church around the world and greater than any one denominational family. Many members carried much of what they had learned in the Association out into the wider world. In 1923 the president of the Association was an English student, A. de G. Gaudin, and he became a leading Irish Presbyterian elder and, as Headmaster of Dungannon Royal School, was a person highly respected in educational circles. Professor Guthrie was president during his student days.

In 1965 the Association combined with the Congregational Society to form Prongsoc in anticipation of the formation of the United Reformed Church. Prongsoc continues many of the activities associated with both societies and the members meet at a weekly Sunday lunch.

In the congregation

In discussions in the Session and in congregational meetings there was always a deep sense of the duty of spreading the Good News of Christ. It was recognised that evangelism was the life-blood of the church and yet there was always difficulty in seeing how this duty could be fulfilled by St Columba's congregation in Cambridge. From its foundation its energies had been concentrated on providing a form of worship and of church-life for those who came from presbyterian backgrounds. The congregation was and is a gathered company drawn from a wide area. There has never been a clear local area which could be regarded as St Columba's parish. To enter upon a systematic visitation of all the homes in the immediate area of the church would be to encroach on other denominations and particularly on the Church of England and from the first it was made clear in repeated statements by the Session that St Columba's had no proselytizing aim. Moreover, the immediate environment of the church is not a residential area. Evangelism has therefore had to take the form of attempting to foster the Christian conviction and witness of the members in their fellowship within the church and in their daily lives. Johnston Ross held series of Gospel services on Wednesdays at 8 p.m. when, as he announced, 'the Gospel will be preached in simple words and its acceptance urged, but no one will be molested by enquiries or appeals'. All the ministers have been conscious of the presence of a changing congregation with varied needs and capacities and to whom the message has to be presented in a way which will enlighten their mind and win their allegiance freely and without manipulative pressure. St Columba's has always eschewed any campaigns which could be regarded as a molestation of the individual's right to respond or to reject; indeed, it may be more liable to the danger of coldness of spirit and lack of urgency in commending the message.

The call to evangelism has never been entirely silent. Frequent resolutions by the General Assembly kept the call alive, quite apart from the concern of many members of the church. Professor Carnegie Simpson conducted a series of meetings in 1925 in which he expounded the Christian faith. In 1941, in response to a General Assembly resolution on the task of the Church in time of war, Professor Farmer and Professor Whitehorn both spoke at meetings on three consecutive evenings on individual responsibility and on the corporate responsibility of the Church. In 1955, the Men's Society of the church proposed that there should be a council of evangelism in the church. Professor Farmer suggested a meeting of the Session and all office-bearers to

consider the suggestion and out of this emerged a plan for a year of evangelism beginning in March 1956. This involved group meetings, the use of prayer cards, concentrated visiting of members, and a climax in special services in February and March in 1957, with attempts to follow up whatever impressions were made. A letter was sent to all members setting forth the aim of the special year; it was to enable members to 'make a clearer and more faithful witness to Jesus Christ'; as members they ought to take a delight in private and public worship and be prepared to respond to the love of God in obedience and service. The letter held that one of the hindrances to the effectiveness of the witness of St Columba's was that the members did not know each other well enough as Christians and it was hoped that meeting in groups would help them to know each other at this deep level and they could also become centres of local influence.

In 1958 the Session surveyed the results of the special effort and stressed again the value of a faithful use of the means of grace and the duty of witness and service. Service involved the use of money and this led to discussion of the increasingly fashionable theme of stewardship. Cooper drafted a pamphlet, *What can I do?*, and this was circulated to the members. St Columba's was not liable to be swept away by exuberant response. In 1959 Cooper reported that on an ordinary Sunday about one quarter of the members attended; this rose to about a half on Communion Sundays. He asked for comments on these stark figures and also on ways in which the services could be improved. Mrs Whitehorn thought there was need for a greater discipline over members and that Communion cards should be introduced whereby a record of the attendance of members could be kept and those who were remiss could be personally reminded of their obligations. This was also a recommendation of the Quinquennial Visitation by the Presbytery in 1961. This suggestion was not adopted as its effect was not predictable and it could cause embarrassment among the many visitors who came to St Columba's: it was said they might feel they were intruders.

In 1963, in the ministry of Mr Speirs, the stewardship project was again revived; a meal, groups, and a service of rededication were planned; by 1964 it seemed that the effectiveness of the groups had varied widely but a few gave some cause for encouragement. An attempt to revive the groups was made by giving them a new field of study under the general title of 'A Movement Outwards'. A study card reminded the groups of the danger of becoming a static church; the Church had to be outward bound, seeking neighbours at work or in times of trouble and drawing them to follow Christ. Young people also needed to be befriended; they lived in an age when rebellion against parents and against society was common. There were the

immigrants who tended to huddle together and feel threatened. There were those who had fallen out of society.

Another version of this approach was tried on an ecumenical scale in 1967; this was called 'The People Next Door' and sought to draw together groups from different denominations to study how Christians ought to act in the midst of contemporary perplexities. A further effort was made in 1971 under the slogan 'Christ in Cambridge' when house groups pondered the helpfulness, meaningfulness and difficulties of the faith; they were asked to ask themselves why the Church was not growing. Members of St Columba's were found in fourteen or fifteen groups. In 1975 the appearance of a new translation of the New Testament was the cue for a period of special Bible study under the title 'Good News for Cambridge'; during Lent Mr Speirs concentrated on the Gospel of Luke and a group discussed the sermons and made suggestions for their preparation. In 1976 the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church emphasised the importance of evangelism for a church hoping to survive and this theme has been echoed in services and church meetings in St Columba's.

All these activities may seem far removed from mass movements drawing in the multitude but St Columba's by its very nature and tradition was not likely to be in a position to spearhead a mass movement. There have been societies such as the Christian Union in the University which have been geared to such a policy and St Columba's has at times reaped some of the harvest.

In York Street

In another direction St Columba's became responsible for a Mission in Cambridge. This arose through the initiative of Mrs Lewis and Mrs Gibson. Engrossed as they were in Oriental erudition, they were also wide awake to the need for missionary work in Cambridge. They set their sights upon Romsey Town, a section of Cambridge where housing and the general amenities were far below the standard of other areas of the city and where many College servants had their homes. Many of these people were dependent upon the Colleges for a livelihood but they were socially worlds away from University circles. Mrs Lewis and Mrs Gibson saw the need for social and missionary work and they also believed that here was a field in which the students of the newly-opened Westminster College could gain experience of pastoral work. An independent mission had been opened in the area in 1885 and new premises for its work were opened in York Street in 1898. Mr James Marchant was appointed as missionary in 1899 but he soon left to enter Westminster College and he eventually became a member of the staff of Dr Barnardo's Homes. In 1901 Mrs Lewis and Mrs Gibson decided

that the premises could be the base from which their plans could be realised and so they bought the hall and offered it to St Columba's in the hope that the church might sponsor and direct the project. The Session replied with caution; they saw the need of the area but they had no control over the students of the College and the financial resources of St Columba's could not cover responsibility for the new venture. The ladies were not daunted and they said they would buy the property 'for the purposes of the work of St Columba's church'. Moreover, they began meetings in a house in Hope Street in 1906 and in 1908 they paid for the building of 'a nice little hall with caretaker's cottage' in Romsey Terrace and they then conveyed the property to St Columba's. Mrs Gibson conducted a Bible class for women. Mrs Anderson Scott shared in the work. Mrs Gibson saw the need 'for our poor efforts' in the 'eager faces' which showed a craving for light. Mrs Lewis sought to meet an educational need by learned and illustrated lectures on such subjects as the Balkans. She also showed slides setting forth the glories of the great church of St Sophia. A social meeting was attended by one hundred and twenty women and twenty husbands. The work continued in Hope Hall until 1927 when it was sold to the Ely Diocesan Society for the Deaf and Dumb for £900.

The Session at last yielded to the request to accept responsibility for running the York Street Mission, but they still insisted that Mrs Lewis and Mrs Gibson should continue to own the property. The Session decided to appoint a missioner and they offered a salary of £110 a year. Twenty-two applied for the position and Mr John Mitchell of Edinburgh was appointed. Cambridge Council of Service was ready to encourage the work and as early as 1906 contributed £48 to the funds. Mrs Lewis and Mrs Gibson also added rooms at York Street at their own expense.

In 1907 the Session agreed that St Columba's should become the owners of the property. To strengthen the links with the church Mitchell was elected to be an elder of St Columba's and with him Alexander Wood, then a young scientist who had shown interest in the work and became secretary of the Mission council. Mitchell decided to become a candidate for the ministry and in 1907 he entered Westminster College; in 1910 he was ordained to be minister of Blackhill, Co. Durham, but he soon moved to be minister of Canonbury Church in London. He was succeeded by Mr Haworth from Blackburn who was appointed for six months in the first instance at a salary of £50 and he stayed six months. His successor was the Rev T.H. Davies, a Baptist minister from Dukinfield, near Manchester, and he was given permission to preside at the Communion services in York Street if the minister of St Columba's was unable to be present. His work was reported to

be 'signally successful' but in 1912 he planned to enter Westminster College to prepare for ordination in the Presbyterian Church; the Session agreed, provided that his studies did not interfere with his work in York Street, but he was soon forced by ill-health to leave Cambridge. In 1913 it was noted that the work was still being carried on with encouraging numbers of young people attending on Sunday evenings. Dr Wood's Young Men's Bible class had fifty-four members; this class raised money for missions, had a number of regular bible-readers, and also had many sporting activities including football, cricket, cycling, walking, running, swimming and a summer camp. Arthur Guthrie Gamble, a Westminster student, gave much help between 1912 and 1915 and he organised a Boys' Brigade Company which within six months had recruited sixty members and in 1914 had summer camps at Stapleford and at Abington Grange.

Students of Westminster College became more involved in the work and learned something of what Principal Skinner called 'the extra-mural science of the human heart'. Help was also given by some other University students. In 1954 the Irish Moderator, Principal J. Ernest Davey, reminded the English General Assembly of his links with the Presbyterian Church of England; he had a brilliant record as a student in Cambridge and as a Fellow of King's College and he said that he had taken part in the work in York Street Mission.

Miss Alexander, who had been a deaconess at Ayr, was appointed at a yearly salary of £80 to work among women and girls.

Mrs Lewis and Mrs Gibson wrote to the Session offering to pay for the erection of two more rooms at York Street but the Session at its meeting on 25 July 1913 came to no decision on the offer. However, just over a fortnight later the Session was summoned after the Sunday morning service to receive an ultimatum from Mrs Lewis to the effect that she was leaving Cambridge on the following day for a month and wanted to have the matter decided before she left. The Session decided, somewhat testily, that 'since she practically owned the site' she was at liberty to proceed to erect the rooms. As might be expected, there were protests about the irregular procedure when the Session held its next meeting but tempers cooled and it was later agreed that 'in all the circumstances' the Session should give 'its cordial consent' and thank the donors for 'this fresh evidence of their deep interest'.

Skinner reported that the burden of sharing in the work in York Street was proving too heavy for the students, but they continued to help on into 1915 when he again protested about the demands made upon the students. However, the first World War was now in progress and sacrifices had to be made. Dr Wood met the Senatus of the College to plead for continued help

and Sydney John Haggis and Herbert H. Farmer agreed to help from February to October 1916, and then in October 1916 the Westminster College Missionary Association agreed to continue to help.

Miss Alexander was feeling the burden of the work and she wanted to go to work with the YMCA. In 1916 she resigned, saying that 'in my opinion the results obtained do not justify further outlay of my time and strength'. Her place was taken by Mrs Treborth Jones, the widow of a member of St John's College; she was appointed to help on a part-time basis at £30 a year.

In 1917 Reginald E. Fenn agreed to be the missioner provided his appeal for exemption from military service was granted; in fact he continued to help throughout his student career and was closely involved in the work from 1919 to 1922. This was part of the apprenticeship for a future Moderator of the General Assembly.

The Mission survived the war period and in 1922 Wood estimated that it would take £160 a year to run the Mission and only £60 could be raised in York Street itself. A sale of work was organised by members of St Columba's. In the twenties the Missioner was W.D. Crane who proceeded to Westminster College in 1928 and trained for the ministry. In these years J.E.L. Newbigin and A.E. Howard, also students at Westminster College, gave assistance, especially in the Sunday School. Howard was paid £60 for his help in 1922–23. In 1923 Dr Wood was made Honorary Superintendent and in many succeeding years he undertook an ever-increasing share of the burden, often without much assistance. In 1941, during the second World War, an attempt was made to get more regular help; a lay reader of the Church of England was planning to enter Westminster College to prepare for the presbyterian ministry and it was arranged that he would be assistant superintendent, but the quality of his work was soon in question and he resigned in 1943 and he never entered the College. Wood by now was forced to say that his other work made it impossible for him to continue to act as superintendent and he implored the College to increase its help.

The work was still in difficulties in 1945. Indeed, it always faced difficulties and there was never sufficient help to take advantage of the opportunities. Apart from the enthusiasm of Dr Wood and some spasmodic helpers, members of St Columba's never felt that this was where their interest lay. Moreover, even in the days of early prosperity it was pointed out that 'it is the very best class of Christian women who attend'; rarely did the Mission draw any who could have been called the 'submerged' residents of Romsey Town.

In 1945 the minister, now Cooper, called a meeting of Session, of the York Street council, and representatives of the Senatus and students of

Westminster College, to consider plans to develop the Mission so as to cater for the social and recreational work of the neighbourhood. Cooper suggested that an assistant minister could be appointed with special responsibility for the work in York Street; this was explored, but there was no response from students in Westminster College or from the Scottish and Irish Colleges. Wood then arranged in 1947 that the Rev John Fletcher, Congregational minister at Leiston, Suffolk, be appointed superintendent at £300 a year, with the possibility of a house being available, but Fletcher did not accept. Mr E. Deadman, a Congregationalist, was then appointed. In 1946 G. E. Jaegar, Westminster College, gave help during the Easter vacation for which he was paid £10; W.P. Irving gave similar help in 1947 for 10 guineas.

In 1948 approaches were made to the General Assembly to see if help could be given, but, after a visit by the Rev Dr Murray Smith of the Home Mission Board, St Columba's was informed that no help could be given. The Session now decided that St Columba's must 'lay down its sole responsibility for the work in York Street'. Approaches were made to the other churches in the area to see if any of them would take over the work but there was no response.

An arrangement was made with the Local Education Authority to take over the premises for youth work, to pay a small rent, and to leave the halls available for the continuation of Sunday School work by St Columba's. Deadman was given three months notice and a final service was held on 9 October 1949. St Columba's had representation on the new Youth Council at York Street and among those recorded as having served on the Council are Michael Whitehorn, R. Goodlife, and Miss Caroline Dobson.

The Sunday School work was carried on by Miss Gertrude Easton who in 1965 had completed forty years service in York Street. She continued the work until 1974 when her increasing disabilities forced her to retire. She combined her Sunday School work with a Girl Guides' Company. She carried on the work single-handed, and few from St Columba's responded to her appeals for helpers, especially for a pianist.

In York Street, many people gave devoted service and many were moulded and helped by its influence. It drew the loyalty of many members and the interest of many adherents, but it can scarcely be said that the imprint of St Columba's has been left in the area.

Overseas Missions

The missionary interest in St Columba's has extended far beyond the bounds of Cambridge. The congregation was founded towards the end of the great century of Foreign Missions and Cambridge University provided

volunteers for many of the missionary enterprises in all parts of the world. The famous 'Cambridge Seven' gave a glamour and romance to the missionary movement which drew the interest and enthusiasm of a great company. St Columba's had its share in this missionary epic and in the Gibson Hall there is an oak mural tablet presented by Stanley Ellis, himself a missionary elder, on which is the roll of honour of those missionaries in whom St Columba's had a special interest; some of these were nurtured in the congregation and others were associated with the church during their time in Cambridge as students. Many went to presbyterian mission fields in India, in China and in Formosa, now Taiwan. The open door of China was an alluring call. The China Inland Mission was at that time the largest of all the protestant missionary societies and drew missionaries from all denominations, among them C.T. Studd of the 'Cambridge Seven', but presbyterian missions also put a mighty effort into the work in China. Professor Macalister was an enthusiastic supporter of the missionary work of the Church and, in addition to his many other labours, he was for a time Convener of the Synod's Foreign Mission Committee. In 1913 he said the evangelization of China was the most momentous concern of the first half of the twentieth century. The missionary impulse also took Charles H. Thomson on a mission to the Jews in Constantinople and to an early death; he had had a brilliant career in the University and at Westminster College.

At the head of St Columba's roll of honour stands the name of Ion Keith-Falconer who was not only first in time but surely first in debonair brilliance and courage. He attended Professor Macalister's Bible-class, but through all his life he was a member of the Free Church of Scotland though he could be bound by no denominational barriers and his name is rightly on the roll for he is the possession of Christendom.

The Hon Ion Keith-Falconer was a member of the noble Scottish family of Keith which held the title Earl Marischal. One of the Earls founded Marischal College which is now part of the University of Aberdeen. One of his grandsons was created Earl of Kintore and this earl was the great-great-grandfather of Ion Keith-Falconer. Ion was born in Edinburgh in 1856. His father had taken the side of the Free Church at the Disruption in 1843 and Ion continued this loyalty. He was sent to Harrow School and this English atmosphere did not dilute his Free Church loyalty; while at Harrow he said, 'I have very nearly decided to become a Free Church minister'. After Harrow he went for a year for special tuition in mathematics to the Rev Lewis Hensley, vicar of Hitchin, a former Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and the Senior Wrangler in 1846. Hensley noted that while Ion was ready to attend the services in the Church of England 'he kept in his head and in his

convictions a strong attachment to the church of his early education'. In 1874 he proceeded to Trinity College, Cambridge, where, after starting the study of mathematics, he switched to theology and developed a zest for the study of Hebrew; this led to a First in the Theological Tripos, a First in the Semitic Languages Tripos, and to the award of the Hebrew Prize and the Tyrwhitt Hebrew scholarship. Yet, far from being an academic recluse, he was renowned as a cyclist and was president of the London Bicycle Club.

From early years he was fired by an unusual Christian zeal. When in Hitchin he held a number of meetings in the open air and in schoolrooms. In Cambridge he was swept up into the preparations for the visit of the evangelist, D.L. Moody. He was a leading figure in a mission started in Barnwell which was then known as a squalid and poor suburban village with spawning areas of huddled houses. It had all the problems which Mrs Lewis and Mrs Gibson were later to discern in Romsey Town area. The Barnwell Mission hired the Theatre Royal on the Newmarket Road for some months; it was not as regal as its name would suggest and it was eventually purchased by the Mission for £1,650. Keith-Falconer gave time and money to the project but this was not the limit of his interest. He also became immersed in the Mile End Road Mission in London and became its honorary secretary; in 1880 he contributed £2,000 towards the £20,000 needed to erect a new hall to hold over four thousand people.

Yet it was his oriental studies which led him to the major decision of his life. He went to study Arabic at Assiout on the upper Nile and by 1884 he was convinced that he was called to missionary work. His studies had given him an interest in the world of Islam and his thoughts now turned to Aden, an arid and dreary headland, but also an important harbour on the way from West to East and a gateway into Arabia; over a quarter of a million camels converged on Aden each year.

The Church Missionary Society was considering the planting of a mission in Aden but though Keith-Falconer had a high regard for the Church of England and for many of its clergy, especially Handley Moule, at that time principal of Ridley Hall in Cambridge, he did not offer himself to that Society. He was still a son of the Free Church of Scotland and he asked the Free Church to recognize his proposed enterprise for which he himself would bear all the expenses. He set out in 1885 to survey the prospects and the needs; he returned in April 1886 with plans for a school, an orphanage and a hospital and he proposed to return to Aden at the end of the year and start the work.

Meanwhile he was appointed to succeed W. Robertson Smith as the Lord Almoner's Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge, a position

which involved the giving of one brief course of lectures each year. His last act in England was the delivery of his course of three lectures on 'The Pilgrimage to Mecca'. He arrived in Aden in December and started work with his customary enthusiasm but conditions were miserable and, instead of the stone bungalow he had expected to be able to use, he and his wife had to make do with a decrepit tin structure and he soon was the victim of a recurrent fever which wore down his strength and within six months he had passed away and his remains were laid in the inhospitable soil of Aden. So wide was the influence of his heroic life and death that the Free Church of Scotland went forward with the work and the Keith-Falconer Memorial Church was built at Aden. His biography went through seven editions and he must surely rank high in the chronicle of the saints.

It is perhaps difficult to recapture the exuberant zeal which could coin such slogans as 'the evangelization of the world in this generation' but there is sober food for thought in the fact that on St Columba's roll of honour twice as many went out on missionary service in the first half of its century as in the second.

In the twentieth century many world issues have come vividly before the Christian Church and St Columba's has been kept aware of the needs of refugees, of the poor nations, of the perils of racial strife, and of world development. The 1% Appeal for relief and development has had an encouraging response.

Mr Speirs has had a special care for the lonely and mentally troubled people of Cambridge and for those who have difficulty in taking a place in the usual social life; he has been much in touch with such issues as chaplain to Fulbourn Hospital. His concern was shared by others and out of this arose the St Columba – Emmanuel centre which is supported financially by the two churches and by the local authorities and some charitable trusts. The centre has organised various groups for people with different problems and for helping to rehabilitate people to take their place in life. People are referred to the centre by medical and social agencies and a wide variety of people have passed through the centre in the past eight years. From 1969 to 1970 the warden was Miss Catherine Russell, from 1970 to 1976 Miss Catherine Whitehead, and since 1976 Rev Paul Betts, a Church of England clergyman.

ROLL OF HONOUR OF MISSIONARIES

Ion Keith-Falconer	Aden
Isabel Paterson	India
Garden Blakie	China
A.S.M. Anderson	China
A.P.M. Anderson	Lovedale, Africa
Mary Innes	Livingstonia
Stephen Band	China
H.H. Weir	Korea
H.W. Oldham	China
F.P.H. Stirling	India
C.H. Thomson	Constantinople
W.P. Paton	China
E.B. Ross	India
A.E. Davies	Formosa
A.F. Jackson	China
T.W.D. James	China
D.B. Mellis Smith	China
Edward Band	Formosa
Dorothy Ball	India
William Short	China
J.C. Smith	China
Hubert Wilson	Livingstonia
A.G. Gamble	China
Alice Rowe	Lovedale
E. Forrester-Paton	India
J. Stanley Ellis	China
R.E. Fenn	China
William Paton	India
L. Maclachlan	China
G.F. Mobbs	China

Marjorie Scott	Formosa
E.L. Allen	China
Margaret A.F. Roxburgh	China
Mary Anderson Scott	India
P. Hepburn Scott	India
Laurence H. Kerr	China
Dorothy Crawford	China
R.S. Wilson	India
M.D. Gray	India
G.C. Martin	India
F.G. Healey	Formosa
Mary I. Dixon	China
Jean Philip	India
John Roberts	China
Geoffrey T. Pike	Livingstonia
Margaret Beattie	Formosa
Marjorie Milne	India
W. Scott Morton	Manchuria
James Waddell	China
Arthur Hay	China
E. Hope Job	Singapore
I.R.M. Latto	China
R.H. Mobbs	China
A.G. MacLeod	India
J.H. Manson	India
J.E.L. Newbigin	India
J.S. Henderson	Malaya
J.N. Whitehorn	Formosa
Elizabeth Whitehorn	Formosa
J. Margaret Barclay	Formosa
William M. Steen	India
T. Ainslie Russell	India
Patricia Russell	India

ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN UNITY

In the early years of its growth St Columba's was not concerned with Christian unity. It was struggling to become a distinct congregation and to justify its existence as a presbyterian church. Moreover, after a long struggle the right had just been won to lift the tests imposed upon nonconformists entering the Universities and now was the time to claim and enjoy the new privileges. Mention has already been made of Donald MacAlister's determined fight in 1875 with the authorities of St John's College to convince them that being a Presbyterian he could no longer be under compulsion to attend College chapel. St Columba's was a symbol of the new freedom from the pressure of the establishment. Again, when the services were begun in the Guildhall, it was noted that many among those attending were not Presbyterians. The form of service and the fame of the visiting preachers attracted Anglicans who were uneasy about the ritual elaborations which were taking place in some parish churches in the wake of the Oxford Movement. Though St Columba's did not set itself up as a proselytizing body it could scarcely avoid seeing these interested visitors as potential recruits to the new church and, though the records always noted that members of the Church of England were received into membership of St Columba's at their own request, there was a quiet satisfaction at their reception. Therefore denominational distinctiveness rather than ecclesiastical union was uppermost in the outlook of St Columba's. Professor Lumby, the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, could attend the ceremony for the laying of the foundation stone of the new church and he could welcome the growth of a presbyterian church in Cambridge, but members were still conscious of the struggle for survival in such a stronghold of the Established Church.

Further, with a strong Scottish element among the members, the new congregation did not see itself simply as one more nonconformist church in Cambridge. This was made clear at the very first meeting of the Session in 1893. It so happened that a plan was afoot just then to form a Cambridge Nonconformist Council. Halliday Douglas and Professor Macalister had been to a preliminary meeting where it was made clear that the proposed Council would need to take political action to secure and safeguard nonconformist civil and educational rights. The Session decided that 'the spiritual work of the Church was liable to be hindered by the Church taking political action as a corporate body' and therefore St Columba's should not join the Council, though it would co-operate in evangelical and social work. The Session also

added the rider that this corporate abstention from political action did not deny 'the duty of Christian men to take part in public and political matters'. The Council was formed and it approached St Columba's with an offer to modify the offending assertion about political action if that would induce St Columba's to join. Dr. Moulton, the learned Methodist Headmaster of the Leys School added his plea but the Session was not moved to change its decision. Whether or not because of St Columba's abstention the Council never became an active body. In 1897 nonconformists found a new focus in the formation of the Cambridge District Free Church Council drawn from 'Evangelical Free Churches and other like bodies' and of this St Columba's became a member. As early as 1905 the noted Baptist preacher, Dr F.B. Meyer, spoke in St Columba's on a subject which, even seventy years later, might seem somewhat brash: 'The Contribution of the Free Churches to the Reunion of English Christendom'.

During the twentieth century there has been a worldwide search for ways in which to express the unity for which Christ prayed. This arose largely from experience on the mission fields where Christians of many different denominations became aware that they possessed so much in common as they sought to present the message of the Gospel to Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists, Confucians and many others. St Columba's was never allowed to forget this quest for unity. Many missionaries had gone from Westminster College and from Colleges in the University and St Columba's was well informed of their work. William Paton, a student of Westminster, became a great missionary statesman and Secretary of the International Missionary Council and was associated with William Temple, Visser 't Hooft and other pioneers of the movement for unity. Many members of the Senatus of Westminster College have been involved in national and international conferences and negotiations and their interests have rubbed off on the congregation. Professor Carnegie Simpson was a colourful habitué of ecumenical gatherings and of the ecclesiastical corridors of power. Professor Whitehorn maintained these wide connections and was a well-known figure in the World Presbyterian Alliance and he was a presbyterian delegate to the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam. This connection with inter-church movements has been maintained by Principal A.G. Macleod and Professor M.H. Cressey. Convictions concerning truth and the need for the recognition of diversity have made the path to unity a stony pilgrimage. The jagged gap between episcopacy and presbytery has been bridged in South India and in North India but there is as yet no sign that this will prove to be the form of bridge which others will try to build. One of the architects of the Indian union was J. E. Lesslie Newbigin, a Cambridge graduate whose name is on

St Columba's missionary roll of honour; he went to India as a Presbyterian missionary and became one of the first bishops of the united Church. He has also been on the staff of the World Council of Churches and is now on the staff of the Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, and he is the Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church for the year 1978-79.

Attempts have been made to bring the city-centre churches together for worship and study. In 1931 and 1935 the congregation was invited to an Armistice-day service in Holy Trinity Church. In the time when Rev Eric S. Woods was Vicar of Holy Trinity St Columba's Halls were hired for social occasions. In 1931 the Vicar, Rev C.J. Morton, addressed a social meeting in St Columba's hall. Holy Trinity Church has also been the centre for services during Lent and Whitsuntide. There were invitations to other services in city centre churches but it is only within comparatively recent years that Free Church ministers have been found in Church of England pulpits. The present minister of St Columba's and members of Westminster College Senatus have been seen in the pulpit of Great St Mary's and of St Edward's Church. St Columba's Church has also been a member of the Cambridge Council of Churches since its inception and has taken part in its activities especially in plans to give a welcome to the many visitors to Cambridge.

The Free Churches have now for many years held joint services on Christmas Day and Good Friday. The Session decided in 1939 to support the continuation of these services 'until some alternative opportunity for the demonstration of Christian Unity should be found'.

By history, tradition and forms of worship the Presbyterian Church had affinities with churches of the Congregational pattern. The first hints of a drawing together between St Columba's and the Congregational Churches in Cambridge are discernible in the records of 1945. They tell of plans for a meeting of elders and deacons in 1946 and again in 1947; these were to be only of an exploratory nature. In January 1948, in response to a Presbytery questionnaire on the feasibility of Presbyterian-Congregational union, the Session replied that it was both possible and desirable provided there was sufficient latitude in any plan for differing emphases upon authority in the Church. There was also need of definite acts of co-operation as 'a sign and symbol of intention to go forward', but there was, said the Session, still lacking the real union of spirit which was necessary before a full union could take place.

In 1951 the General Assembly urged local churches to take such action as would foster this union of spirit. The Session invited all the office-bearers of the Congregational Churches in Cambridge to a Communion service and this was followed by suggestions for co-operation in work for children and

young people. The Session suggested joint services during the summer months with Emmanuel Church but Emmanuel hesitated to take what seemed such a revolutionary decision; it would be improper for anyone to find either church closed on any Sunday at the regular hour of service. Instead, Emmanuel suggested an annual interchange of pulpits, with the professors at Westminster College included so that all three Congregational churches in Cambridge might have Presbyterians in the pulpits. The Session felt that this added little to what already took place between all Free Churches.

From 1953 elders were invited to attend the meetings of the Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Congregational Union.

Cherry Hinton Road Church then made a move to hold a united meeting of the Congregational ministers and deacons in Cambridge with the minister and elders of St Columba's. This meeting was welcomed but it made clear that any practical steps would have to be taken by Emmanuel and St Columba's. These two churches did hold united Easter week services in 1957 and 1958.

After the arrival of the Rev Ronald Speirs further meetings of elders and deacons were held. Moreover plans for union were now being considered at national level and in 1966 the Congregational Union took a big step towards union by asking all its churches to enter into a covenant to form the Congregational Church in England and Wales. It was realised in the course of negotiations that a union with the Presbyterian Church would mean the introduction of the office of elder into Congregationalism and Miss Mary Anderson Scott set out the presbyterian position in meetings with Emmanuel.

The Rev Richard J. Hall, the minister of Emmanuel, then invited St Columba's to send observers to sit in on a plan for a church extension project in the King's Hedges' area which might be made possible with compensation money from the Castle End Mission property if, as seemed likely, it were to be demolished in a city redevelopment plan. The building still stands; the development at King's Hedges did not take place and there are now tentative discussions about an ecumenical venture in the area. The Session was represented on the planning committee by John Hinds and Alexander Baxter.

The Cambridge University Presbyterian Association, as has already been noted, invited speakers from many branches of the Church. It also had links with the other denominational societies in the university. In the academic year of 1910-11 a united meeting of the Free Church societies was held and the speaker was the versatile Methodist leader, Dr J. Scott Lidgett. The union of the Presbyterian Association with the Congregational Society in 1965 took place in anticipation of the Presbyterian-Congregational union in 1972. In

1976 the Roman Catholic student community was granted the use of St Columba's for their Sunday Mass while their own Fisher House was being rebuilt.

United summer services with Emmanuel which seemed so alarming in 1951 were begun in the month of August 1966. The uniting of evening services was also much discussed. In 1964 a united evening service once each month was considered but in 1968 the union of all evening services was proposed. At a congregational meeting in October Mrs O'Neill proposed that St Columba's should approach not only Emmanuel but St Benet's Church of England and suggest a united evening service for all three churches, all the services to take place in St Benet's which was an attractive and moderate-sized building. However it was decided to proceed with the plan for united services with Emmanuel for a trial period of six months and at the same time to make approaches to St Benet's. The united services have continued and for a time there were united services with St Benet's once a quarter. Little St Mary's has occasionally been involved in the united service.

In 1965 the draft scheme for national union with the Congregational Church was published and it was discussed at a joint meeting of elders and deacons; Miss Day reported that the meeting, though poorly attended, was useful. This report does not indicate that there was as yet any great enthusiasm for the union.

In 1966 a dramatic proposal came from Emmanuel asking St Columba's to appoint representatives to meet representatives from Emmanuel to consider closer working and perhaps an arrangement for a team ministry and ultimately leading to a union of the congregations. This was welcomed by the Session and Mr Speirs and either Mr Russell or Mr Hughes and a member of the Senatus of Westminster College were appointed to meet the representatives from Emmanuel. The meeting produced a plan in October for uniting the two congregations; the united Church would provide a strong Reformed witness in Cambridge and would be able to staff all its activities. It was suggested that the Emmanuel building be the place of worship and the St Columba's site be the site of new buildings for all the other activities of the united church. Or, it might be preferable to erect a complete new suite on one site which would have a place of worship and ancillary rooms and halls; the place of worship would not be a vast sanctuary, and, if need be, two morning services could be held with varieties of liturgy suited to the two traditions. The report admitted that there were difficulties in such a union. A single congregation of eight hundred members was not usual in Free Churches and might prevent the growth of a common life which was possible in a smaller community, but the plan could be 'an exciting road to a very

worthwhile objective'. In June 1967 plans were made for a meeting of elders and deacons to discuss these proposals and examine them in the light of the possible national union. In a further Session meeting in October Ian Male proposed and Dr Megaw seconded a resolution that the witness of the Church in central Cambridge would be strengthened by the union of Emmanuel and St Columba's; this was passed unanimously and the Session decided to seek the views of the congregation at a special meeting. This took place on 20 October and the Session's resolution was approved but with some cautionary remarks about undue haste. St Andrew's Street Baptist Church then wrote raising the issue of co-operation with St Columba's but the Session replied that the negotiations with Emmanuel had to be given priority, though any plans for co-operation made by the ministers would be welcome.

In December, the plan for union was discussed again by the Session in the light of reactions from groups of members who had discussed the plan. Mr Speirs reported that estimates of the value of the two sites were being sought with a view to considering which site should be retained and how it should be developed. However, hesitations were now arising. There was a fear among many members that some of the spiritual and social values in the presbyterian way of doing things might be lost; older members might find it hard to adjust to the changes and St Columba's might find itself burdened with demands for helping to sustain small rural congregational churches. This fear was now more substantial as plans for national union were crystalizing. These national plans were, nevertheless, welcomed by the Session with minor reservations. Dr Megaw was supported by Mr Rees Evans in questioning the wisdom of calling the proposed new church 'The Reformed Church'; they thought the title should be 'The United Presbyterian/Congregational Church'. There were also some doubts about the value of division into Provinces which would be too big for Moderators to be real fathers-in-God to ministers and people.

At a congregational meeting on 22 March 1968 the Session asked for approval for continuing the consultations with Emmanuel so as to lead to 'further closer relations'. Mr Kelly, in presenting the case for approval, admitted that a united church of six hundred members might lose something of the warmth and vigour of St Columba's, but many factors, including the cost of maintaining two large adjacent suites of buildings, pointed to the wisdom of union; a union would release personnel and money for other important Christian purposes. Professor O'Neill thought that the approval of talks leading to 'further closer relations' would be a commitment to union which he opposed on several grounds; the traditional links between St Columba's and Westminster College would be weakened; St Columba's

distinctive life would be submerged in the united congregation; the reduction in the number of places of worship would be a reduction in the number of places where people could hear the Gospel; the special attraction of St Columba's to Scots and overseas Presbyterians would be broken; the creating of the union would waste time and energy which could be given to 'outward thinking'; in fact, in his view, the union would mean the destruction of a living congregation. Few spoke in support of Dr O'Neill, and Dr Whitehorn maintained that the resolution was 'wisely drafted' and Mr Speirs held that working for closer relations was not an irreversible commitment to union, but in the end the resolution was passed by fifty-four to three in the form that the congregation approved the continuation of the consultations with Emmanuel but without any mention of the aim of closer relations. On 14 April a united communion service was held attended by about three hundred communicants. Then in August the whole plan ground to a halt; the policy sub-committee of the Session recommended to the Session that no more formal moves be made towards union with Emmanuel and that enquiries about architectural and financial possibilities be suspended; the matter could be raised again as and when expedient.

By 1971 the plans for national union were in the final stage and at the annual general meeting in that year Principal A.G. MacLeod presented the case for supporting the union and approving the final plan. Dr Knox proposed and Mr Broadribb seconded a proposal to support the scheme of union and this was unanimously accepted.

The United Reformed Church came into being in 1972. This was marked in the Cambridge District by a united service in Great St Mary's Church when the preacher was Principal MacLeod. The members of St Columba's have got to know many of the members of the churches in the District and members of St Columba's have served on committees of the District Council. In the city of Cambridge there is an annual public witness to the union when the churches combine for special services to mark the visit of the Moderator of the General Assembly.

THE BUILDINGS AND ASSETS OF ST COLUMBA'S

The church building was opened in 1891. Seating about four hundred people it has now served as a place of worship for over eighty years. Mention has already been made of changes in the siting of the Table, the Pulpit, the choir stalls and the oak screens; these changes have been attempts to make the building a more fitting setting for the weekly worship. The acoustics of the building have often been a source of complaint. Sermons may have an inherent homiletic obscurity which can make them hard to understand but inaudibility can render even the clearest sermon unprofitable. Various amplifying devices have been introduced. In 1967-68 several systems of amplication were tested but it was decided that the recommended expense of about £200 would not be justified. In 1971 a member agreed to pay for a fresh survey of the available methods of dealing with the acoustics and this cost about £200. In due time an anonymous donor paid for the installation of an amplifying system and this has later been supplemented by equipment for the hard of hearing.

The congregation has always had to meet so many unavoidable calls for expenditure on the church fabric, on the halls, on the manse and for payment of the customary General Assembly assessments that there has been no scope for lavish expenditure on furnishings and carpeting and the church can scarcely be said to be a repository of ecclesiastical art, ancient or modern. However, many gifts have been given to improve the facilities. A new lighting system was installed and paid for out of a legacy from Lady MacAlister. Lady Bruce presented the organ which was built by the firm of Lewis and renovated by the Willis company. The oak screens in the apse and at the rear of the church were gifts in memory of Macalisters and MacAlisters. The lectern was a gift in memory of Hugh Porter; it was given by his widow and sons. War Memorial tablets were erected in memory of those who died in the World Wars. The oak organ screen was given by Sir Donald MacAlister in memory of Professor J. Couch Adams.

A tablet was erected in memory of Mrs Lewis and Mrs Gibson recording their vast erudition and their deep interest in the work of St Columba's. Tablets have been erected in memory of several notable elders: Herbert C. Coulson, Enoch Circuit, John Robert Roxburgh, Frederick Drake and Alexander Wood.

A generous donor paid for the recent remodelling of the furnishing of the apse and the resiting of the pulpit, and the Table is the gift of Westminster College.

A number of legacies have been received and the interest therefrom makes a useful supplement to the offerings of the members.

When the site was purchased it was fortunate that it was an area large enough for the future erection of a church hall. The hall was erected in 1899 and was of great benefit to the church organisations and especially to the Sunday school. It was used by the girls' societies and by the Scouts and by other groups. A badminton club was founded and has had a long and distinguished record in badminton leagues; it still flourishes but most of its members are now drawn from outside the congregation. A second smaller hall was opened in 1912 and was named the Gibson hall; Mrs Gibson bought the site and a house in St Andrew's Street to provide a way of entrance, and she also contributed to the cost of its erection. Another ancillary room has been designated as a memorial to Lady MacAlister. When Mrs Gibson assisted the erection of the new hall she specified that its weekday letting should be for 'purposes not inconsistent with the character of a Christian church, such as dancing and theatricals'.

The suitability of the St Columba's suite of buildings for the purposes of the congregation has been a source of much discussion and many suggestions. So far no suggestion has proved sufficiently convincing to persuade the congregation to make drastic changes. In 1964 Mr Speirs submitted to the committee of management a draft scheme for the total redevelopment of the site with a new building containing a centre for worship, halls, offices, a minister's flat and a caretaker's flat and all this combined in a building with 'an incarnational design' showing the Church to be in the world as it is. The adjacent estate agent, January & Co., was expanding his premises at this time and he offered £35,000 for the church halls but it was felt that this amount would not be sufficient to enable the remaining church area to be developed along the lines of Mr Speirs' memorandum. The next suggestion was that the whole premises should be sold and the congregation move to a suburban site where there would be room for development and for parking space. January & Co., now made a tempting offer of £120,000 for the whole suite and site. The great drawback of a suburban site is that it would remove the church even further from other suburban areas around the city. St Columba's by its very nature has drawn members from all parts of the city and its hinterland, and a central site is more convenient than any other for the majority of its members.

In 1966, as has already been mentioned, there was a plan for a union with Emmanuel Church and for a major redeployment of resources but suggestions along these lines came to a sudden halt. New problems arose with the development of the Lion Yard site into a complex of car park, offices and

shops and this seemed to indicate that St Columba's would become a down-town plant in a commercial backwater. However, as the Lion Yard project has developed St Columba's Church has become more striking in its setting and Downing Street has become a busy thoroughfare wherein St Columba's Church, despite the accumulated grime upon its stonework, is a prominent feature.

The redundancy of the parish church of St Andrew the Great has been a possibility since 1969 and there have been attractions in the idea of St Columba's moving to this historic site and disposing of the Downing Street premises but the absence of any hall accommodation in St Andrew's has been a serious obstacle and the move could not be made without serious loss to the life and work of St Columba's.

The Church is made up of people and not of buildings but people are influenced by their environment. In the history of the Church hallowed associations have gathered round traditional sites of worship, and the waves of people who have worshipped in the buildings of St Columba's Church have been shaped by the pattern and atmosphere of worship therein. The story is not without its shadows and difficulties but it is also rich in memories of a faithful and persevering people who have sought to worship God therein and to grasp the will of God for them in their day and generation.

'God of our fathers! be the God
Of their succeeding race.'

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